The Masked DETECTIVE

10¢

DEC.

DEATH ISLAND

A Complete Book-Length Novel
Featuring the Daring Exploits of
a Mysterious Crime Avenger

By C. K. M. SCANLON

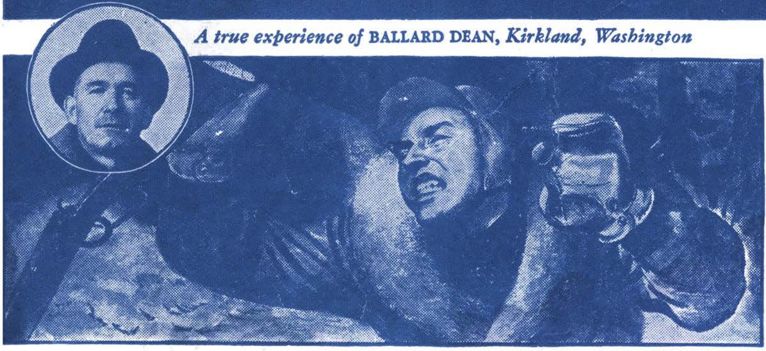
A THRILLING
PUBLICATION

VISIT…

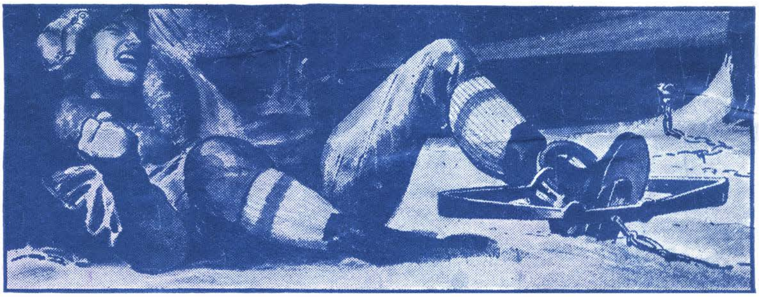
LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

"THE JAWS OF DEATH CLAMPED DOWN ON ME!"

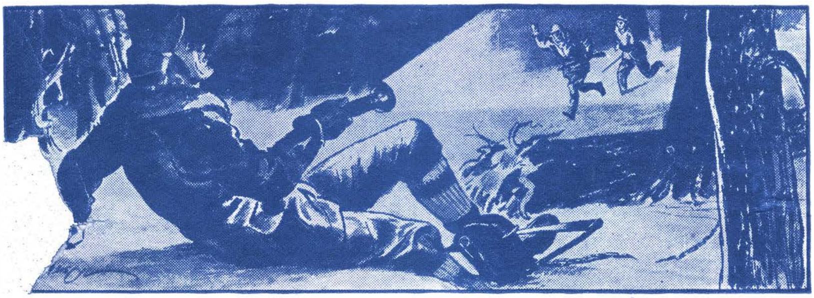
A true experience of BALLARD DEAN, *Kirkland, Washington*



"THE THING sprang out of the earth one bitterly cold evening as I was returning to camp after an all-day deer hunt," writes Mr. Dean. "I suffered excruciating agony, as it bit into my leg. It was a bear trap, illegally set for deer.



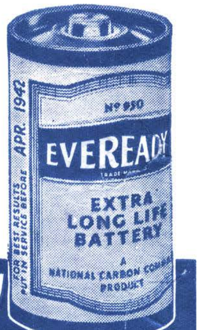
"FRANTICALLY, I TRIED TO GET LOOSE as the cold knifed through my clothing. With sinking heart, I found my struggles of no avail. In a few hours, if help could not be summoned, I would freeze to death. Darkness came on as I fought hopelessly with the strong steel jaws.



"THEN I THOUGHT OF MY FLASHLIGHT. There was a chance that other returning hunters might be in the woods. Flashing the bright beam off and on, my efforts were finally rewarded. Thanks to those 'Eveready' *fresh* DATED batteries, two men saw my signal and rescued me from that death trap."

(Signed) Ballard Dean

The word "Eveready" is a registered trade-mark of National Carbon Company, Inc.


APR. 1942
FOR BEST RESULTS PUT IN SERVICE BEFORE
Nº 950
EVEREADY
TRADE MARK
EXTRA LONG LIFE BATTERY
A NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY PRODUCT

FRESH BATTERIES LAST LONGER... *Look for the* **DATE-LINE**

NATIONAL CARBON COMPANY, INC., 30 EAST 42nd STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.
Unit of Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation
UCC

Speed Your Way to Success by specialized Home Study

So you dropped out of school too soon? Well, *cheer up!* Ask any representative group of Executives, Engineers or Educators and most of them will tell you: "*You CAN make good through specialized home study . . . IF you will make the effort and STICK to your course.*" In fact, you'll find that a number of important men in nearly every locality are former home study students themselves. They KNOW and have PROVED that *home study pays.*

In 40 years, home study has become an integral part of "the American way" . . . a nationwide educational system especially geared to the needs of wage earners. Today, there are far more home study schools than you perhaps realize—and you may place confidence in the courses of the American School, established over 40 years ago to bring you the advantages of advanced education.

Success through Home Training

Courses complete in themselves and include basic subjects essential to proper understanding of more advanced portions.

Catalogs and bulletins sent FREE.

Instruction material and methods simplify and speed up learning.

Tuition fees moderate and fair.

This seal protects you!

COMMERCE and Industry are tough taskmasters today — but they are *just.* The penalties of failure may be heavy — but the rewards of success are rich. If you persist in doing work that *anyone* else can do—if you carelessly leave yourself open to competition with Machinery that sooner or later may do all the "unthinking" jobs . . . the repetitive tasks — you are slated for final disappointment and bitterness.

To win out, today, you must THINK. You must think ON the job and AWAY from it and, *most important,* you must think AHEAD of it. And that takes study.

Join this "Promotion Parade" of Progress-Minded Men and Women

Of the approximately 2,000,000 men and women enrolled for further education in universities, colleges, institutes of technology and home study institutions, about 37½%—or 750,000—have chosen *home study* as most practical for their purposes. They want to win Success. *You do, too!* They have FAITH in themselves. Do you believe in *yourself?* They have investigated *home study*—decided that it offers them their way "out and up" . . . *out* of the low pay, periodically unemployed rank and file . . . *up* into well paid positions where they enjoy prosperity, security and respect.

Get the facts, yourself. On coupon, check the line of work that MOST interests you . . . mail it PROMPTLY for information and complete details of this offer.

NO OBLIGATION. Address your inquiry, TODAY, to

AMERICAN SCHOOL
Dept. G758, Drexel at 58th, Chicago

Mark, Clip and Mail This Coupon NOW

AMERICAN SCHOOL, Dept. G758, Drexel at 58th, Chicago
Without obligation, Please send FREE and postpaid, bulletin and details of the Subjects checked.

- ☐ Air Conditioning
- ☐ Elec. & Gas Refrigeration
- ☐ Architecture and Building
- ☐ Plumbing and Steam Fitting
- ☐ Automotive Engineering
- ☐ Aviation Drafting
- ☐ Aviation Engineering
- ☐ Business Management
- ☐ Accounting and C.P.A.
- ☐ Salesmanship
- ☐ Retail Merchandising
- ☐ Cost Accounting
- ☐ Practical Bookkeeping
- ☐ Economics of Direct Selling
- ☐ Private Secretary
- ☐ Diesel Engineering
- ☐ Surveying & Topographical Drafting
- ☐ Sheet Metal Pattern Drafting
- ☐ Electrical Engineering
- ☐ Drafting and Design
- ☐ Radio and Television
- ☐ High School
- ☐ Home Economics Courses
- ☐ Business Law
- ☐ Liberal Arts
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Shop Management
- ☐ Tool Making
- ☐ Better Foremanship
- ☐ Engine and Boiler Work

Name.................................*Occupation*..................
Address..*Age*..........
City.....................................*State*....................

Thousands Have Made Good through HOME STUDY

• EVERY STORY BRAND-NEW •

The Masked DETECTIVE

Vol. 2, No. 3 DECEMBER, 1941 Price 10c

Coming in the Next Issue

A GRIM CREW OF SPIES USES A RACE-TRACK RACKET TO FURTHER ITS SINISTER PURPOSES

in

THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS

A Complete Book-Length Baffling Crime Novel Featuring Rex Parker

By C. K. M. SCANLON

•

PLUS OTHER STORIES

Featuring a New Mysterious Crime Avenger

in

DEATH ISLAND

A Complete Book-Length Novel

By C. K. M. SCANLON

Rex Parker Follows a Jungle Trail to Justice When a Series of Murders Engulfs an Expedition in Blood! The Masked Detective Opens His Bag of Tricks to Trap a Desperate Crew of Undersea Killers...... 16

EXCITING SHORT STORIES

POP-OFF ROOKIE ....Leo Hoban 92

O'Rourke Knew Bert Miles Would Always Blow Up Under Pressure—but He Didn't Expect Him to Explode in a Killer's Face!

CATS CAN KILL..........Ray Cummings 99

Murder Assumes a Strange and Ghastly Form when an Ingenious Killer Resurrects an Ancient Legendary Beast of Prey!

AND

UNDER THE DOMINO.....A Department 12

Published quarterly by BETTER PUBLICATIONS, INC., 10 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Copyright, 1941, by Better Publications, Inc. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If a name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes, and are submitted at the author's risk.

Read our companion magazines: Popular Sports Magazine, Popular Western, G-Men Detective, Black Book Detective, Thrilling Western, Thrilling Detective, Thrilling Adventures, Thrilling Love, The Phantom Detective, The American Eagle, Sky Fighters, Popular Detective, Thrilling Ranch Stories, Thrilling Wonder Stories, Startling Stories, Thrilling Mystery, Texas Rangers, Popular Love, Everyday Astrology, Detective Novels Magazine, Range Riders, Thrilling Sports, West, Rio Kid Western, Captain Future, Exciting Love, Exciting Sports, Exciting Western, Exciting Detective, Air War, RAF Aces, Thrilling Football, Popular Football, Exciting Football and Masked Rider Western.

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

I JUMPED MY PAY $35 A WEEK...

This Free Book Showed Me How

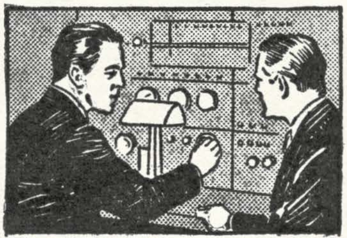
RICH REWARDS IN RADIO

A True Story By J. C. V.
(Name and Address Sent on request)

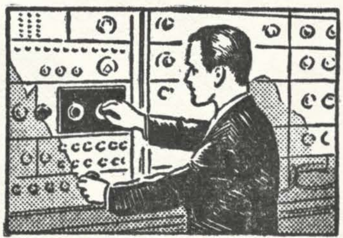
"I had a low-pay, no future job as a store clerk. I was not satisfied, but read about the opportunities in Radio and how N. R. I. would train me at home for them. I enrolled right away."

"The Course National Radio Institute gave me was so practical that I was soon ready to make $5 to $10 a week in spare time servicing Radio sets."

"After graduating I got a job as Radio Operator aboard ship, and was able to travel and see many parts of the world with all expenses paid, and a good salary besides."



"Immediately after leaving my ship job, I was made Chief Engineer of a small broadcasting station. Later I held the same job with several other similar stations in the South."



"I'm now Chief Engineer of WDOD, Chattanooga, Tenn. I make $1,800 a year more than when I started Radio. There are many opportunities for trained Radio Technicians today."

BE A RADIO TECHNICIAN

I Will Train You at Home In Spare Time

Many fellows who want better jobs are going to read these words—and do nothing about them. But a few, like J. C. V., who are MEN OF ACTION are going to say "SHOW ME HOW TO BE A SUCCESS IN RADIO!" The rest of my story is for these men. The "do-nothings" can stop here.

Why Many Radio Technicians Make $30, $40, $50 a Week

Radio is one of the country's busiest industries today. On top of a record demand for Radio sets and equipment for civilian use, the Radio industry is getting millions of dollars in defense orders. The 882 broadcasting stations in the U. S. employ thousands of Radio Technicians with average pay among the country's best paid industries. Repairing, servicing, selling home and auto Radio receivers (there are 50,197,000 in use) gives good jobs to thousands. Many other Radio Technicians take advantage of the opportunities to have their own service or retail Radio businesses. Think of the many good jobs in connection with Aviation, Commercial, Police Radio and Public Address Systems. N. R. I. trains you to be ready when Television opens new jobs. Yes, Radio Technicians make good money because they use their heads as well as their hands. They must be trained.

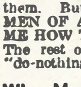
Beginners Quickly Learn to Earn $5, $10 a Week Extra in Spare Time

Nearly every neighborhood offers opportunities for a good part-time Radio Technician to make extra money fixing Radio sets. I give you special training to show you how to start cashing in on these opportunities early. You get a modern Professional Radio Servicing Instrument. My fifty-fifty method—half working with Radio parts, half studying my lesson texts—makes learning Radio at home interesting, fascinating, practical.

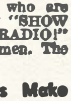
Find Out How I Train You for Good Pay in Radio

Mail the Coupon below. I'll send my 64-page book FREE. It tells about my Course; the types of jobs in the different branches of Radio; shows letters from more than 100 of the men I trained, so you can see what they are doing, earning. MAIL THE COUPON in an envelope or paste on a penny postal.

J. E. SMITH, *President*,
Dept. IMO9, National Radio Institute,
Washington, D. C.



EXTRA PAY IN ARMY, NAVY, TOO



Every man likely to go into military service, every soldier, sailor, marine should mail the Coupon Now! Learning Radio helps men get extra rank, extra prestige, more interesting duty at pay up to 6 times a private's base pay. Also prepares for good Radio jobs after service ends. **IT'S SMART TO TRAIN FOR RADIO NOW!**

WANT TO MAKE MORE MONEY? FIND OUT WHAT RADIO OFFERS

GOOD FOR *free* 64-PAGE BOOK

Mr. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. IMO9,
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Send me the FREE 64-page book which helped J. C. V. jump his pay $35 a week. I want to know about Radio's opportunities. (No salesman will call—write plainly.)

Name .... Age.......

Address ....

City .... State...........

They Never Knew It Was SO EASY To Play

Thousands Learn Musical Instruments By Amazingly Simple Method

No Teacher, No Musical Knowledge Required. In a Short Time You Start Playing Real Tunes!

700,000 Now Enrolled

THINK of the fun YOU are missing! The popularity, friendship, good times! Why? Because you think it's *hard* to learn music. You have an idea that it's a slow, tedious task, with lots of boring drills and exercises.

That's not the twentieth-century way! Surely you've heard the news! How people all over the world have learned to play by a method so simple a child can understand it—so fascinating that it's like playing a game. Imagine! You learn without a teacher—in your spare time at home—at a cost of only a few cents a day! You learn by the famous print-and-picture method—every position, every move before your eyes in big, clear illustrations. You CAN'T go wrong! And best of all, you start playing real tunes almost at once, from the very first lesson.

No needless, old-fashioned "scales" and exercises. No confused, perplexing study. You learn to play by playing. It's thrilling, exciting, inspiring! No wonder hundreds of thousands of people have taken up music this easy way. No wonder enthusiastic letters like those reproduced here pour in from all over the world.

Sound interesting? Well, just name the instrument you'd like to play and we'll prove you CAN! If interested, mail the coupon or write.

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC
29411 Brunswick Bldg.,
New York City

"Thar's Gold in Them Thar Hillbilly Songs." Craze for mountain music, "swing" and other popular forms has brought fame and fortune to many who started playing for the fun of it. Thousands have discovered unexpected pleasure and profit in music, thanks to the unique method that makes it amazingly easy to learn.

Learned Quickly at Home. I didn't dream I could actually learn to play without a teacher. Now when I play for people they hardly believe that I learned to play so well in so short a time. *H. C. S., Calif.

Send for FREE Booklet and Print and Picture Sample

See for yourself how this wonderful self-instruction method works. Sit down, in the privacy of your own home, with the interesting illustrated booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home." No salesman will call—decide for yourself whether you want to play this easy way. (Instruments supplied at discount when wanted, cash or credit.)

Wouldn't Take $1,000. "The lessons are so simple," writes *S. E. A., Kansas City, Mo., "that anyone can understand them. I have learned to play by note in a little more than a month. I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for my course."

Found Accordion Easy. "I've always wanted to play the piano accordion," writes *H. E. from Canada, "but thought I'd never learn it. Then I read about your lessons. I don't know how to express my satisfaction."

Plays on Radio. I am happy to tell you that for four weeks I have been on the air over our local radio station. So thanks to your institution for such a wonderful course. *W. H. S., Alabama.

**Actual pupils' names on request. Pictures by Professional models*

U. S. SCHOOL OF MUSIC
29411 Brunswick Bldg., New York City, N. Y.

I am interested in music study, particularly in the instrument indicated below. Please send me your free booklet, "How to Learn Music at Home" and the free Print & Picture Sample.

Piano
Violin
Guitar
Piano Accordion
Plain Accordion
Saxophone
Cello
Hawaiian Guitar
Banjo
Mandolin
Ukulele
Cornet
Trumpet
Harp
Trombone
Flute
Piccolo
Organ
Drums and Traps
Modern Elementary Harmony
Voice Culture

Name.................................... Have You This Instru.?......

Address..

City.......................................State..........

☐ Check here for Booklet "A" if under 16 years of age.

Lend Me 15 Minutes A Day

..and I'll prove I can make you a NEW MAN

I'M "trading-in" old bodies for new! I'm taking men who know that the condition of their arms, shoulders, chests and legs—their strength, "wind," and endurance—is not 100%. And I'm making NEW MEN of them.

I don't care how old or young you are, or how ashamed of your present physical condition you may be. I can add SOLID MUSCLE to your biceps—yes, on each arm—in double quick time! I can broaden your shoulders, strengthen your back, develop your whole muscular system INSIDE and OUTSIDE! I can add inches to your chest, give you a vise-like grip, make those legs of yours lithe and powerful. I can shoot new strength into your old backbone, exercise those inner organs, help you cram your body so full of pep, vigor and red-blooded vitality that there's not even "standing room" left for weakness and that lazy feeling! Before I get through with you I'll have your whole frame "measured" to a nice, new, beautiful suit of muscle!

I Was a 97-lb. Weakling

All the world knows I was ONCE a skinny, scrawny 97-pound weakling. And NOW it knows that I won the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man." Against all comers! How did I do it? How do I work miracles in the bodies of other men in only 15 minutes a day? The answer is "Dynamic Tension," the amazing method I discovered and which changed me from a 97-pound weakling into the champion you see here!

What 15 Minutes a Day Can Do For You

Are you ALL MAN—tough-muscled, on your toes every minute, with all the up-and-at-'em that can lick your weight in wildcats? Or do you need the help I can give you—the help that has already worked such wonders for other fellows, everywhere?

In just 15 minutes a day, right in the privacy of your own home, I'm ready to prove that "Dynamic Tension" can lay a new outfit of solid muscle over every inch of your body. Let me put new, smashing power into your arms and shoulders—give you an armor-shield of stomach muscle that laughs at punches—strengthen your legs into real columns of surging stamina. If lack of exercise or wrong living has weakened you inside, I'll get after that condition, too, and show you how it feels to LIVE!

Actual photo of the man who holds the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man."

Charles Atlas

America's Greatest "Builder of Men"

Among all the physical instructors and "conditioners of men" ONLY ONE NAME STANDS OUT. That name is Charles Atlas!

In every part of the country Charles Atlas is recognized as "America's Greatest Builder of Men." Almost two million men have written to him. Thousands upon thousands have put their physical development into his hands!

And now that the call is for men capable of helping America meet and conquer any national emergency, many thousands of others (even those already in their country's Army and Navy) are calling upon Charles Atlas to build the kind of men America vitally needs.

Here's PROOF Right Here!

"Results come so fast by your method that it seems just as if some magician put on the pounds of solid muscle just where you want them."
—W. L., Missouri

"Feel like a million dollars and have a 44" normal chest -A 2" GAIN IN 4 DAYS!"
—L. A. S., Illinois

"My doctor thinks your course is fine. In 15 days have put two inches on my chest and ½ inch on my neck."
—B. L., Oregon

"My muscles are bulging out and I feel like a new man. My chest measures 38 in., an increase of 5 in., and my neck increased 2 in."
—G. M., Ohio

FREE THIS FAMOUS BOOK THAT TELLS YOU JUST HOW TO GET A BODY THAT MEN RESPECT AND WOMEN ADMIRE

Almost two million men have sent for and read my book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." It tells you exactly what "Dynamic Tension" can do. And it's packed with pictures that SHOW you what it does. Results it has produced for other men. RESULTS I want to prove it can get for YOU! If you are satisfied to take a back seat and be pushed around by other fellows week-in, week-out, you don't want this book. But if you want to learn how you can actually become a NEW MAN, right in the privacy of your own home and in only 15 minutes a day, then man!—get this coupon into the mail to me as fast as your legs can get to the letterbox! CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-L, 115 East 23rd St., New York City.

MAIL THIS COUPON NOW!

Everlasting Health and Strength

CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 77-L,
115 East 23rd St., New York City

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Name ....
(Please Print or Write Plainly)

Address ....

City .... State..........

A Money-Making Opportunity

for Men of Character

EXCLUSIVE FRANCHISE FOR

AN INVENTION EXPECTED TO REPLACE A MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY

Costly Work Formerly "Sent Out" by Business Men Now Done by Themselves at a Fraction of the Expense

This is a call for men everywhere to handle exclusive agency for one of the most unique business inventions of the day.

Forty years ago the horse and buggy business was supreme—today almost extinct. Twenty years ago the phonograph industry ran into many millions—today practically a relic. Only a comparatively few foresighted men saw the fortunes ahead in the automobile and the radio. Yet irresistible waves of public buying swept these men to fortune, and sent the buggy and the phonograph into the discard. So are great successes made by men able to detect the shift in public favor from one industry to another.

Now another change is taking place. An old established industry—an integral and important part of the nation's structure—in which millions of dollars change hands every year—is in thousands of cases being replaced by a truly astonishing, simple invention which does the work better—more reliably—AND AT A COST OFTEN AS LOW AS 2% OF WHAT IS ORDINARILY PAID! It has not required very long for men who have taken over the rights to this valuable invention to do a remarkable business, and show earnings which in these times are almost unheard of for the average man.

EARNINGS

One man in California earned over $1,600 per month for three months—close to $5,000 in 90 days' time. Another writes from Delaware—"Since I have been operating (just a little less than a month of actual selling) and not the full day at that, because I have been getting organized and had to spend at least half the day in the office; counting what I have sold outright and on trial, I have made just a little in excess of one thousand dollars profit for one month." A man working small city in N. Y. State made $10,805 in 9 months. Texas man nets over $300 in less than a week's time. Space does not permit mentioning here more than these few random cases. However, they are sufficient to indicate that the worthwhile future in this business is coupled with immediate earnings for the right kind of man. One man with us has already made over a thousand sales on which his earnings ran from $5 to $60 per sale and more. A great deal of this business was repeat business. Yet he had never done anything like this before coming with us. That is the kind of opportunity this business offers. The fact that this business has attracted to it such business men as former bankers, executives of businesses—men who demand only the highest type of opportunity and income—gives a fairly good picture of the kind of business this is. Our door is open, however, to the young man looking for the right field in which to make his start and develop his future.

Not a "Gadget"— Not a "Knick-Knack"—

but a valuable, proved device which has been sold successfully by business novices as well as seasoned veterans.

Make no mistake—this is no novelty—no flimsy creation which the inventor hopes to put on the market. You probably have seen nothing like it yet—perhaps never dreamed of the existence of such a device—yet it has already been used by corporations of outstanding prominence—by dealers of great corporations—by their branches—by doctors, newspapers, publishers—schools—hospitals, etc., etc., and by thousands of small business men. You don't have to convince a man that he should use an electric bulb to light his office instead of a gas lamp. Nor do you have to sell the same business man the idea that some day he may need something like this invention. The need is already there—the money is usually being spent right at that very moment—and the desirability of saving the greatest part of this expense is obvious immediately.

Some of the Savings You Can Show

You walk into an office and put down before your prospect a letter from a sales organization showing that they did work in their own office for $11 which formerly could have cost them over $200. A building supply corporation pays our man $70, whereas the bill could have been for $1,600! An automobile dealer pays our representative $15, whereas the expense could have been over $1,000. A department store has expense of $88.60, possible cost if done outside the business being well over $2,000. And so on. We could not possibly list all cases here. These are just a few of the many actual cases which we place in your hands to work with. Practically every line of business and every section of the country is represented by these field reports which hammer across dazzling, convincing money-saving opportunities which hardly any business man can fail to understand.

Profits Typical of the Young, Growing Industry

Going into this business is not like selling something offered in every grocery, drug or department store. For instance, when you take a $7.50 order, $5.83 can be your share. On $1,500 worth of business, your share can be $1,167.00. The very least you get as your part of every dollar's worth of business you do is 67 cents—on ten dollars' worth $6.70, on a hundred dollars' worth $67.00—in other words two thirds of every order you get is yours. Not only on the first order—but on repeat orders—and you have the opportunity of earning an even larger percentage.

This Business Has Nothing to Do With House to House Canvassing

Nor do you have to know anything about high-pressure selling. "Selling" is unnecessary in the ordinary sense of the word. Instead of hammering away at the customer and trying to "force" a sale, you make a dignified, business-like call, leave the installation—whatever size the customer says he will accept—at our risk, let the customer sell himself after the device is in and working. This does away with the need for pressure on the customer—it eliminates the handicap of trying to get the money before the customer has really convinced himself 100%. You simply tell what you offer, showing proof of success in that customer's particular line of business. Then leave the invention without a dollar down. It starts working at once. In a few short days, the installation should actually produce enough cash money to pay for the deal, with profits above the investment coming in at the same time. You then call back, collect your money. Nothing is so convincing as our offer to let results speak for themselves without risk to the customer! While others fail to get even a hearing, our men are making sales running into the hundreds. They have received the attention of the largest firms in the country, and sold to the smallest businesses by the thousands.

No Money Need Be Risked

in trying this business out. You can measure the possibilities and not be out a dollar. *If you are looking for a business that is not overcrowded*—a business that is just coming into its own—on the upgrade, instead of the downgrade—a business that offers the buyer relief from a burdensome, but unavoidable expense—a business that has a prospect practically in every office, store, or factory into which you can set foot—regardless of size—*that is a necessity* but does not have any price cutting to contend with as other necessities do—that because you control the sales in exclusive territory is your own business—*that pays more on some individual sales than many men make in a week and sometimes in a month's time*—if such a business looks as if it is worth investigating, *get in touch with us at once* for the rights in your territory—don't delay—because the chances are that if you do wait, someone else will have written to us in the meantime—and if it turns out that you were the better man—we'd both be sorry. So for convenience, *use the coupon below*—but send it right away—or wire if you wish. But do it now. *Address*

F. E. ARMSTRONG, President
Dept. 4047M, Mobile, Ala.

RUSH FOR EXCLUSIVE TERRITORY PROPOSITION

F. E. ARMSTRONG, Pres., Dept. 4047M, Mobile, Ala.
Without obligation to me, send me full information on your proposition.

Name..
Street or Route..
Box No..
City..
State..

Why Trained Accountants Command High Salaries

—and how ambitious men are qualifying by the La Salle Problem Method

GET this straight

By "accountancy" we do not mean "bookkeeping." For accountancy begins where bookkeeping leaves off.

The skilled accountant takes the figures handed him by the bookkeeper, and *analyzes* and *interprets* them.

He knows how much the costs in the various departments should amount to, how they may be lowered.

He knows what profits should be expected from a given enterprise, how they may be increased.

He knows, in a given business, what per cent of one's working capital can safely be tied up in merchandise on hand, what per cent is safe and adequate for sales promotion. And these, by the way, are but two of *scores* of percentage-figures wherewith he points the way to successful operation.

He knows the intricacies of government taxation.

He knows how to *survey* the transactions of a business over a given period; how to show in cold, hard figures the progress it has made and where it is going. He knows how to *use* these findings as a basis for constructive policies.

Business Control
Through Accountancy

In short, the trained accountant is the *controlling engineer* of business—one man business cannot do without.

Small wonder that he commands a salary two to ten times as great as that of the bookkeeper. Indeed, as an independent operator (head of his own accounting firm) he may earn as much as the president of the big and influential bank in his community, or the operating manager of a great railroad.

Some Examples

Small wonder that accountancy offers the trained man such fine opportunities—opportunities well illustrated by the success of thousands of LaSalle accountancy students.* For example—one man was a plumber, 32 years old, with only an eleventh grade education. He became auditor for a large bank with an income 325 per cent larger.

Another was a drug clerk at $30 a week. Now he heads his own very successful accounting firm with an income several times as large.

A woman bookkeeper—buried in details of a small job—is now auditor of an apartment hotel, and her salary mounted in proportion to her work.

A credit manager—earning $200 a month—moved up quickly to $3000, to $5000, and then to a highly profitable accounting business of his own which netted around $10,000 a year.

And What It Means to You

Why let the other fellow walk away with the better job, when right in your own home you may equip yourself for a splendid future in this profitable profession?

Are you really *determined* to get ahead? If so, you can start at once to acquire—by the LaSalle Problem Method—a thorough understanding of Higher Accountancy, master its fundamental principles, become expert in the practical application of those principles—this without losing an hour from work or a dollar of pay.

Preliminary knowledge of bookkeeping is unnecessary. You will be given whatever training, instruction or review on the subject of bookkeeping you may personally need—and without any extra expense to you.

If you are dissatisfied with your present equipment—if you recognize the opportunities that lie ahead of you through home-study training — you will do well to send at once for full particulars. The coupon will bring them to you without any obligation, also details of La Salle's convenient payment plan.

Check, sign and mail the coupon NOW.

LaSalle Extension University

A Correspondence Institution

DEPT. 11329-HR **CHICAGO**

Opportunities in Accountancy—Check below and we will send you a copy of "Accountancy, the Profession that Pays," without obligation.

☐ **Higher Accountancy:**

Other LaSalle Opportunities: If more interested in one of the other fields of business indicated below, check here:

☐ Business Management
☐ Modern Salesmanship
☐ Traffic Management
☐ Law: Degree of LL. B.
☐ Industrial Management
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Credit and Collection Correspondence
☐ Commercial Law
☐ Modern Foremanship
☐ Expert Bookkeeping
☐ C. P. A. Coaching
☐ Business English
☐ Stenotypy
☐ Effective Speaking
☐ Railway Accounting

Name..

Present Position......................................

Address...

---

*Names available on request.

One LIFE INSURANCE POLICY *INSURES YOUR ENTIRE FAMILY!*

Guarantee Reserve
LIFE INSURANCE
COMPANY

TOTAL COST

Only **$1** **A MONTH**

PAYS FOR ALL

INSURES PARENTS, CHILDREN (Married or Unmarried) BROTHERS, SISTERS and GRANDPARENTS . . . Ages 1 to 75

★ Now, modern life insurance methods make it possible for *all* of your family, including in-laws, to be insured in one policy paying guaranteed benefits for death from any cause.

Instead of issuing five or six policies to include mother, father, sons and daughters, even grandparents, we now issue just one policy that insures them all . . . and at one low cost price of only $1.00 a month.

Guarantee Reserve

FAMILY POLICY

INSURES FROM 2 to 6 MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY

$1,422.00	For Natural or Ordinary Accidental Death
$2,844.00	For Auto Accidental Death
$4,266.00	For Travel Accidental Death

The figures shown above represent the insurance provided by the policy on a typical average family of five persons.

GUARANTEE RESERVE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
DEPARTMENT 17-L, HAMMOND, INDIANA

NO AGENT WILL CALL
10-DAY FREE INSPECTION OFFER
SEND NO MONEY

COMPUTED ON LEGAL RESERVE BASIS

To guarantee payment on each death that occurs in your insured family, we have figured this policy out on the strict legal reserve basis, complying with State government requirements in every respect. This is your assurance of *Cash When You Need It Most.* Claims are paid at once . . . without argument or delay. State records verify our fair and just settlements.

Guarantee Reserve specializes in full family coverage, that's why we can offer safe, guaranteed life insurance on your whole family at one low price of only $1.00 a month.

NO MEDICAL EXAMINATION

To eliminate costly doctor fees, etc., we have eliminated Medical Examination. All people from age 1 to 75, in good health may be included in this new type Guarantee Reserve family policy. No membership fees, no examination fees, no *policy* fee . . . $1.00 a month pays for one policy that insures all.

RUSH—MAIL AT ONCE—DON'T DELAY

Guarantee Reserve LIFE INSURANCE CO.
GUARANTEE RESERVE BLDG., Dept. 17-L Hammond Ind.

Gentlemen: Without obligation, please send me at once complete information on how to get your Family Life Policy for FREE inspection.

Name..

Address..

City..............................*State*..............................

LISTEN YOUNG MEN

INDUSTRY NEEDS YOUNG MEN BETWEEN 17 AND 35 WHO HAVE SPECIALIZED TRAINING. **They are needed now. They will be needed more than ever in the months ahead.** Many fellows are going to grab the first job they can get, whether it offers them a future won't make much difference. They don't realize a "mere job" today **may be no job a year from now.** THE THINKING FELLOW IS GOING TO PREPARE, NOT ONLY FOR A GOOD JOB NOW, BUT ONE THAT WILL BRING HIM A FUTURE. IF YOU ARE ONE OF THESE FELLOWS I OFFER YOU AN—

Amazingly Easy Way to get into ELECTRICITY

I'll Finance Your Training

Electricity is a fast growing field. Tens of thousands of fellows are making **$35.00-$40.00-$50.00 a week and more every week.** But to qualify for one of these jobs **you must be trained to hold it.** Here at Coyne we will train you by the famous Coyne "Learn-by-Doing" method—**90 days shop training. You can get my training first**—THEN PAY FOR IT IN EASY MONTHLY PAYMENTS AFTER YOU GRADUATE UNDER MY "PAY AFTER GRADUATION" PLAN.

Learn Without Books in 90 DAYS

Lack of experience—age, or advanced education bars no one. I don't care if you don't know an armature from an air brake—I don't expect you to! It makes no difference! Don't let lack of money stop you. Most of the men at Coyne have no more money than you have. That's why I have worked out my astonishing offers.

Earn While Learning

If you need part-time work to help pay your living expenses I'll help you get it. Then, in 12 brief weeks, in the great roaring shops of Coyne, I train you as you never dreamed you could be trained...on one of the greatest outlays of electrical apparatus ever assembled . . . real dynamos, engines, power plants, autos, switchboards, transmitting stations...everything from doorbells to farm power and lighting . . . full-sized . . . in full operation every day!

No Books—No Classes

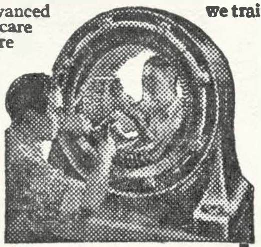
No dull books, no baffling charts, no classes, you get individual training . . . all real actual work . . . building real batteries . . . winding real armatures, operating real motors, dynamos and generators, wiring houses, etc., etc. That's a glimpse of how we train you for a good job.

EMPLOYMENT HELP after Graduation

To get a good job today you've got to be trained. Industry demands men who have specialized training. These men will be the ones who are the big-pay men of the future. After graduation my **Employment Department gives you Lifetime Employment Service.** J. O. Whitmeyer says: "After I graduated, the School Employment Service furnished me with a list of several positions . . . I secured a position with an Electrical Construction Company paying me 3 to 4 times more a week than I was getting before I entered Coyne and today I am still climbing to higher pay."

Get the Facts

Coyne is your one great chance to get into electricity. Every obstacle is removed. This school is 40 years old—Coyne training is tested and proven. **You can get training first—then pay for it in easy monthly** payments after you graduate. You can find out everything absolutely free. Simply mail the coupon and let me send you the big, free Coyne book . . . facts . . . jobs . . . salaries . . . opportunities. This does not obligate you. So act at once. Just mail coupon.



PREPARE FOR JOBS LIKE THESE

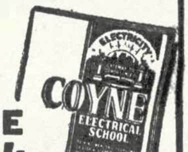
Our Employment Bureau for graduates gives FREE lifetime employment service.

Armature Winder
Sub-Station Operator
Auto & Aviation Ignition
Maintenance Electrician
Service Station Owner
Air Conditioning
Electric Refrigeration
Radio Servicing
and many others

THE HOME OF COYNE

This is our fireproof, modern home wherein is installed thousands of dollars' worth of the newest and most modern Electrical equipment of all kinds. Every comfort and convenience has been arranged to make you happy and contented during your training.

Get this FREE Book



H. C. LEWIS, Pres.
COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL, DEPT. 81-84,
500 S. Paulina Street, Chicago, Illinois

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I'm really in earnest. I do want to get ahead. Send me your big free catalog with full particulars about Coyne training and your plans to help a fellow, who hasn't a lot of money, to get ahead.

Name......................................

Address......................................

City........................ *State*...........

COYNE ELECTRICAL SCHOOL
H. C. Lewis, Pres., Dept. 81-84
500 S. Paulina St. **Founded 1899** **CHICAGO, ILL.**

Anatomy Charts

Learn this Profitable Profession

in 90 Days at Home

Hundreds of men and women of all ages 18-50 make $10.00 to $20.00 in a single day giving scientific Swedish Massage and Hydro-Therapy treatments. There is a big demand from Hospitals, Sanitariums, Clubs, Doctors and private patients as well as opportunities for establishing your own office.
Learn this interesting money-making profession in your own home by mail, through our home study course. Same instructors as in our NATIONALLY KNOWN resident school. A diploma is awarded upon completion of the course. Course can be completed in 3 to 4 months. High School training is not necessary. Many earn big money while learning.

Anatomy Charts & Booklet FREE

Enroll now and we will include uniform coat, medical dictionary, patented reducing roller and Hydro-Therapy supplies without extra cost. The reducing course alone may be worth many times the modest tuition fee.

Send coupon now for Anatomy Charts and booklet containing photographs and letters from successful graduates. These will all be sent postpaid—FREE.

THE College of Swedish Massage
Dept. 863—30 E. Adams St., Chicago

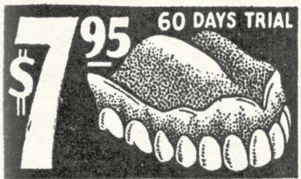
You may send me FREE and postpaid, Anatomy Charts, booklet containing photographs and letters from graduates, and complete details of your offer.

Name ....

Address ....

City .... State ....

SONG POEM WRITERS: Send us your original poem, Mother, Home, Love, Sacred, Patriotic, Comic or any subject, for our plan and FREE Rhyming Dictionary at once. RICHARD BROS., 74 Woods Building, Chicago, Illinois



FALSE TEETH

AS LOW AS $7.95

Per Plate. Dental plates are made in our own laboratory from your personal impression. WORKMANSHIP and Material GUARANTEED or PURCHASE PRICE REFUNDED. We take this risk on our 60-Day Trial Offer.

DO NOT SEND ANY MONEY Mail post card for FREE material and catalog of our LOW PRICES. DON'T PUT IT OFF — Write us today!

Brighton-Thomas Dental Laboratory
DEPT. 852 6217 S. HALSTED STREET, CHICAGO, ILL.

EASY WAY....

Tints Hair

JET BLACK

This remarkable CAKE discovery, TINTZ Jet Black Shampoo, washes out dirt, loose dandruff, grease, grime and safely gives hair a real smooth JET BLACK TINT that fairly glows with life and lustre. Don't put up with faded dull, burnt, off color hair a minute longer. TINTZ Jet Black Cake works gradual . . . each shampoo leaves your hair blacker, lovelier, softer, easier to manage. No dyed look. Won't hurt permanents. Full cake 50c (3 for $1). TINTZ comes in Jet Black, light, medium and dark Brown, Titian, and Blonde. Order today! State shade wanted.

SEND NO MONEY Just pay postman plus postage on our positive assurance of satisfaction in 7 days or your money back. (We Pay Postage if remittance comes with order.) Don't wait — Write today to
TINTZ COMPANY, Dept. 702, 207 N. MICHIGAN, CHICAGO
CANADIAN OFFICE: Dept. 702, 22 COLLEGE STREET, TORONTO

UNDER THE DOMINO

A Department for Readers

CRIME has been likened to a monstrous octopus whose tentacles reach out to grasp the fruits of honest men's efforts and stuff them into its shapeless and insatiable maw. But crime is also like a chameleon—that strange master of camouflage in the animal kingdom which hides itself against varied backgrounds to escape the prying eyes and prying jaws of its enemies.

So does crime hide itself from its enemy, the Law, and criminals, adopting the protective coloration of respectability, conceal their depredations from the keen eyes of the police.

And sometimes crime, growing more clever as it grows more evil, hides a greater scoundrelism behind a lesser one, and the police, dissipating their skills and energies in tracking down the smaller fry, find the master criminals missing from their net. The small crime is solved, but the great crime which the small one was intended to conceal, looms up as a tragic and insoluble mystery.

Many Baffling Questions

In THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS, the complete book-length novel featuring Rex Parker in the next issue, this is exactly what happens. Why was Ralph Sheldon taken for a ride? Why was he killed? Why was he killed in a particular way?

The cloud-scudded moon, looking down with blurred gaze at the peculiar sight of a man apparently standing on his head in the East River, had no answer. Whose were the murderous hands which held the doomed man's ankles and dipped him into the dark water as a man might dip a roll into his morning coffee? Whose brain directed those hands?

This, and other questions, cry out to the police for an answer—and when the answer does not come, then it is that the Masked Detective (Rex Parker to Winnie Bligh and Sergeant Gleason, but to them alone) rips away the veil of the lesser crime to expose the greater one!

Once you begin to read this thrilling novel, THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS, in the coming issue, you will not want to be interrupted until you have finished it. Its suspense, action, masterful sleuthing and hair-raising sequences will hold you to the end. And it will be something to remember, so be sure to be one of the many thousands to enjoy the treat!

Packed with thrills, this novel leads you to the center of a startling spy plot—the perpetrators use a race-track racket to carry out their grim plans!

LETTERS FROM READERS

It's a grand feeling when, after working like troopers to get out an issue and making it the best yet, we get responses from readers that tell us our work has been well done. Like the following, for instance:

Lately, when I read a magazine and like it, I ask myself why, I guess I've sort of become an amateur critic without knowing it. I think what makes the Masked Detective novels so enjoyable is their pace. They're never slow, they keep moving all the time, and the result is the reader is never bored. This one isn't, anyway. So keep on giving us the exploits of Rex Parker, and you can be sure I'll keep reading them.—Ralph P. Hawkes, Buffalo, N.Y.

Thanks for THE THREAT OF THE VIOLENT MEN, a splendid novel. I was recovering from an illness when the issue carrying it came into my hands, and take it from me, it was what the doctor ordered. It cheered and entertained me, and I even believe it helped along my cure. Why not? Good reading is like a tonic.—Ward Sylvester, Canton, Ohio.

I'm a new reader of the MASKED DETECTIVE and an old reader of your companion magazine, THE PHANTOM. Hereafter they're both on my list as equal partners in the required reading field.—Margaret F. Stevens, Missoula, Montana.

Thanks, friends, and to all you others who have written in. And to all who have any suggestions to make in the future, address The Editor, THE MASKED DETECTIVE, 10 East 40th Street, New York, N. Y.

Your letters keep us on our toes and make us maintain the high standards already set. THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS, in the coming issue, will show you what we mean.

See you then. So long.

—THE EDITOR.

Think of It!

Our Graduates Run 43% of ALL the Identification Bureaus in America

Send for complete list of over 750 Bureaus where our graduates have been placed in good positions as

FINGERPRINT EXPERTS

Then write the nearest Bureau and learn what our graduates think of us!

We have space here to list only a FEW of these more than 750 institutions, so be sure to send for the *complete* list!

State of Michigan
State of Washington
State of Massachusetts
State of Illinois
State of Idaho
State of Colorado
State of Iowa
State of Utah
State of Ohio
Bost n, Mass.
New York, N. Y.
Pittsburgh, Pa
St. Paul, Minn.
Mexico City, Mex.
Augusta, Ga.
Seattle, Wash.
Omaha, Neb.
Des Moines, Ia.
Montreal, Can.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa
Elgin, Ill.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Tampa, Fla.
Long Beach, Cal.
St. Louis, Mo.
Lansing, Mich.
Burlington, Ia.
Erie, Pa.
Oklahoma City, Okla.
Trenton, N. J.
Detroit, Mich.
El Paso, Tex.
Schenectady, N. Y.
Scranton, Pa.
Lincoln, Neb.
Mobile, Ala.
Little Rock, Ark.
Pontiac, Mich.
Havana, Cuba
Miami, Fla.
Birmingham, Ala.
Columbus, Ohio
Galveston, Tex.
Houston, Tex.
Windsor, Ont.
Pueblo, Colo.
Salt Lake City, Utah
Atlantic City, N. J.
Sioux City, Iowa
Rochester, N. Y.
Cleveland, Ohio
Spokane, Wash.
Fort Worth, Tex.
Shreveport, La.
Waltham, Mass.
Berkeley, Calif.
Paterson N. J.

Want a Regular Monthly Salary?

Be a Secret Service and Identification Expert!

Enjoy the thrill of getting your man—with no personal danger—PLUS a regular monthly paid salary and the opportunity to share in Rewards. Learn at home, in spare time, and at low cost, the unique secrets of this young, fascinating and fast growing profession. We offer you the same course of training as we gave the hundreds of our graduates who now hold splendid positions in more than 750 institutions. Each of these bureaus has anywhere from ONE to FIFTEEN of our graduates on regular salaries—and new openings develop from time to time.

Wonderful Opportunity for TRAINED MEN in This Young, Fast Growing Profession!

Of the thousands of towns in America, three-fourths are still without identification bureaus. Many more are bound to come! That spells OPPORTUNITY. But you must be READY! It's easy to master this profession that combines thrills with personal safety, AND the security of a steady income. We show you HOW—just as we have already shown the hundreds who now hold good pay positions.

FREE! The Confidential Reports Operator No. 38 Made to His Chief.

Just rush coupon! Follow this Operator's exciting hunt for a murderous gang. Also, get free, "The Blue Book of Crime," showing the wonderful opportunities in the field of Finger Prints and Crime Detection. Take your first step TODAY toward a steady income and success. Mail coupon NOW!

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7968, Chicago

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCE
1920 Sunnyside Ave., Dept. 7968, Chicago.
Gentlemen: With no obligation, send me Confidential Reports of Operator No. 38, also illustrated "Blue Book of Crime," complete list of over 750 bureaus employing your graduates, together with your low prices and Easy Terms offer. (Literature will be sent ONLY to persons stating their age.)

Name ....

Address.. Age.........

AUDELS
MACHINISTS
AND TOOL MAKERS HANDY BOOK
AUDELS
MACHINISTS
AND
TOOL MAKERS
HANDY BOOK
BY
FRANK D. GRAHAM

AUDELS NEW
MACHINISTS
HANDYBOOK
NOW READY!

Prepare!

A KEY TO SHOP PRACTICE
For Every Machinist, Toolmaker, Machine Operator; Draughtsman, Metal Worker; Mechanic or Student. Covers Shop Practice in All Branches.

A READY REFERENCE
Tells How to Operate and Set Up Lathes, Screw and Milling Machines, Shapers, Drill Presses and All Machine Tools.

5 PRACTICAL BOOKS IN ONE!
60 FULLY ILLUSTRATED CHAPTERS
Covering: 1—Modern Machine Shop Practice. 2—Blue Print Reading and How to Draw. 3—Calculations & Mathematics for Machinists. 4—Shop Physics. 5—How to Use Slide Rule.

Get This Information for Yourself. Mail Coupon Today. No Obligation Unless Satisfied. ASK TO SEE IT.

1600 PAGES FULLY ILLUSTRATED $4 COMPLETE • PAY ONLY $1 MO.

THEO. AUDEL & CO., 49 WEST 23rd STREET, NEW YORK
Mail AUDELS MACHINISTS & TOOLMAKERS HANDY BOOK. Price $4 on 7 Days Free Trial. If O. K. I will remit $1 in 7 days and $1 monthly until $4 is paid. Otherwise I will return it.

Name____________________

Address____________________

Occupation____________________

Reference____________________ PAL

NOW a DYNAMIC HEAVY DUTY INDUSTRIAL WELDER

for Only $19.75 RETAIL

WORKS Off 110-Volt Light Socket. This marvelous Dynamic Power Welder does the work of much higher priced types. It is easily portable. WELDS Cylinder Blocks, Bumpers, Fenders, Tanks, Farm Machinery, etc. Will also solder and braze on the lightest material. Works on iron, steel, tin, brass, copper and all other metals. Men without previous experience can make as much as $5.00 on a one hour repair job. In a year's time a Dynamic Welder COSTS YOU LESS THAN 6 CENTS A DAY

Instructions Free—Open a welding shop now. AGENTS—Make big profits selling to garages, factories, janitors and machine shops. Write today for our 10-DAY TRIAL OFFER. DYNAMIC WELDER COMPANY, 2226-SA SILVERTON ROAD, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Asthma Sufferers

Don't rely on smokes, sprays and injections if you suffer from terrible recurring, choking, gasping, wheezing spells of Asthma. Thousands of sufferers have found that the first dose of Mendaco usually palliates Asthma spasms and loosens thick strangling mucus, thus promoting freer breathing and more restful sleep. Get Mendaco in tasteless tablets from druggists, only 60c (guarantee). Money back unless fully satisfied.

MAKE MORE MONEY
Taking Orders For The NIMROD Line

Earn more every day in the year representing old established firm with a complete line of fast selling necessities: Shirts, Ties, Underwear, Hosiery, Pajamas, Raincoats, Sweaters, Leather Jackets, Campus Coats, Pants, Belts, Breeches, Shoes, Uniforms, etc. Every item guaranteed. Experience unnecessary.

Write quick for FREE SALES EQUIPMENT
NIMROD COMPANY,
4922-J Lincoln Ave., Chicago, Ill.

It's New!
It's True!
It's Thrilling!

TRUE ADVENTURES OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST HEROES!
Real LIFE
COMICS
10¢

The Most Amazing Comics Magazine of Them All—Featuring True Stories of the World's Greatest Heroes!

64 PAGES OF TRUE AND GRIPPING ACTION!

•

An Inspiration to American Youth!

Real
LIFE
COMICS

Only 10c Everywhere

How Little Mistakes in Eating Can Keep You Half-Sick

WHICH DO YOU SUFFER FROM?

Dietary Indigestion—Heartburn

He is one of the countless people who suffers needlessly from dietary stomach disorders. Chapter 7 of Victor H. Lindlahr's great book shows a way to quick relief and prevention for thousands.

Common Rheumatism and Arthritis

He suffers from rheumatic pains largely because of simple mistakes in his diet. If he follows the suggestion on page eight of Victor H. Lindlahr's remarkable book he should get quick relief.

Excess Weight

She could reduce in no time, yet actually eat more food than she does now . . . if she only ate properly. *"You Are What You Eat"* would tell her how.

Frequent Colds

She is an easy victim of coughs and colds. Something vitel is lacking in her diet. What? Read the first chapter of *"You Are What You Eat"* to see how easy it should be to put her on the road to strength and health.

Learn How to Eat Your Way to Better Health

HERE, AT LAST, is Victor H. Lindlahr's remarkable method of health through diet brought to you in a big, fascinating book—at a price so low everyone can own it! In just one evening, you can learn how to *correct* mistakes in eating that may have been keeping you below par . . . you may learn how to be healthier, *happier* by following the *proven* principles of health through diet in Victor H. Lindlahr's remarkable book, *"You Are What You Eat."*

Do you know how you may improve your complexion by a simple change in diet? Do you know what high-vitamin fruits and vegetables will help build you up when you are run-down? Do you know what foods often help promote sound, restful sleep? Do you know what methods of cooking destroy the chief value of certain foods? Do you know what vegetables can help in building better blood?

Let Victor H. Lindlahr help you and your family gain better health through diet. It has been done in thousands of cases. It is being done every day!

Don't Let Little Mistakes in Eating Rob You of Good Health

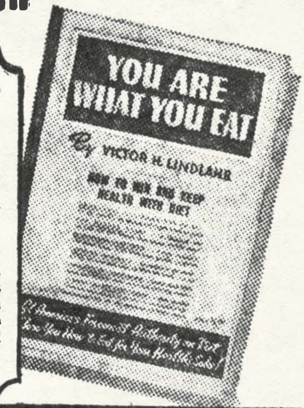
Foods are medicine . . . and Victor H. Lindlahr knows that foods have the power that may give you freedom from many common symptoms. Out of the kitchen can come meals to help put an end to many of your distressing troubles. Yes, foods often possess a remarkable power for improving health—and now Victor H. Lindlahr shows you how to use this power!

FORMERLY $2.50

NOW ONLY 98¢

—send no money!

Just mail the coupon. You will receive Victor H. Lindlahr's book by return mail. When it comes pay the postman 98c, plus a few cents postage. If at the end of 5 days you aren't thrilled—return the book and your money will be refunded without question. Mail the coupon NOW.


YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT
By VICTOR H. LINDLAHR
HOW TO WIN AND KEEP HEALTH WITH DIET

ACT NOW! Send this coupon —5-day free trial

JOURNAL OF LIVING PUB. CORP.
Dept. M-7, Carlton Ave., Jersey City, N. J.

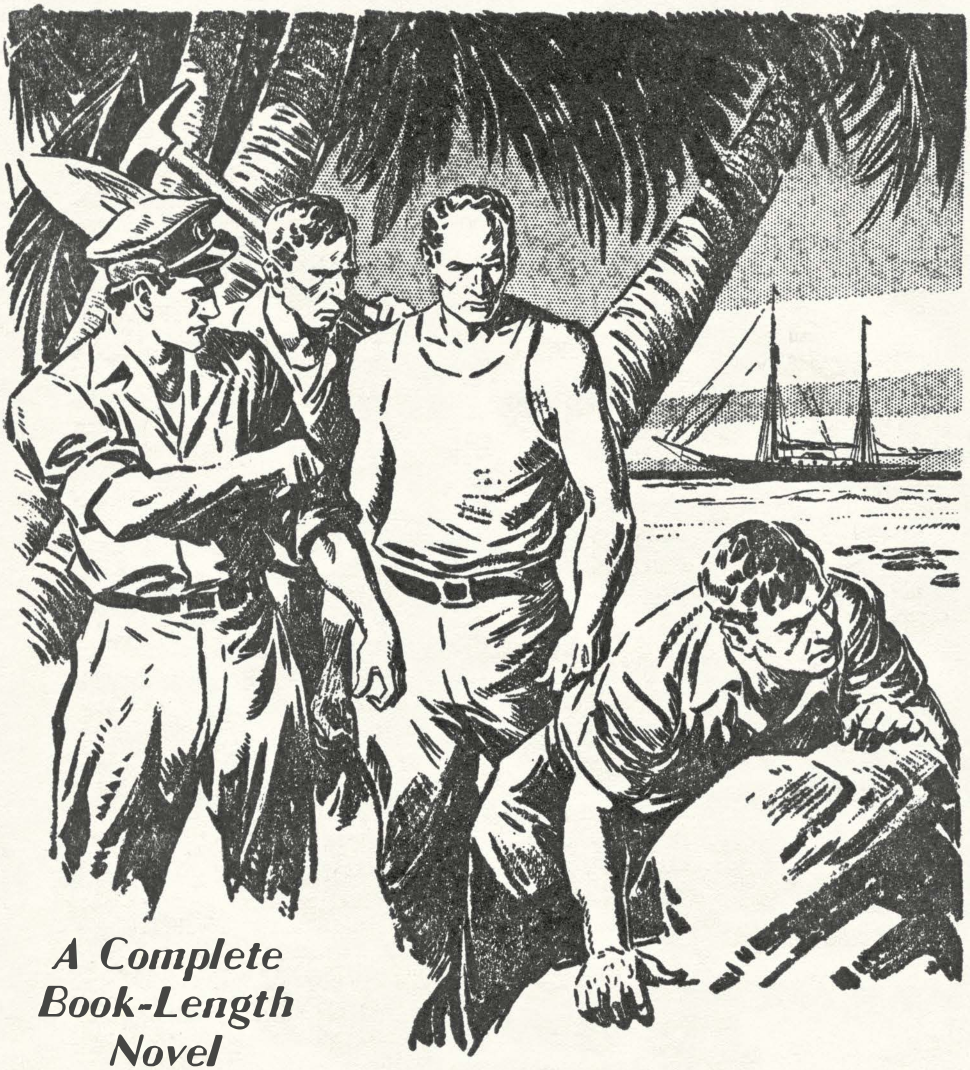
Send me Victor H. Lindlahr's Book, *"You Are What You Eat,"* for only 98c, plus a few cents postage. I understand that if not delighted I may return the book within 5 days and my money will be refunded.

Name ....

Address ....

City .... State..............

NOTE: If apt to be out when postman calls, send $1.00 with coupon and save C.O.D postage.



A Complete Book-Length Novel

DEATH ISLAND

By C. K. M. SCANLON

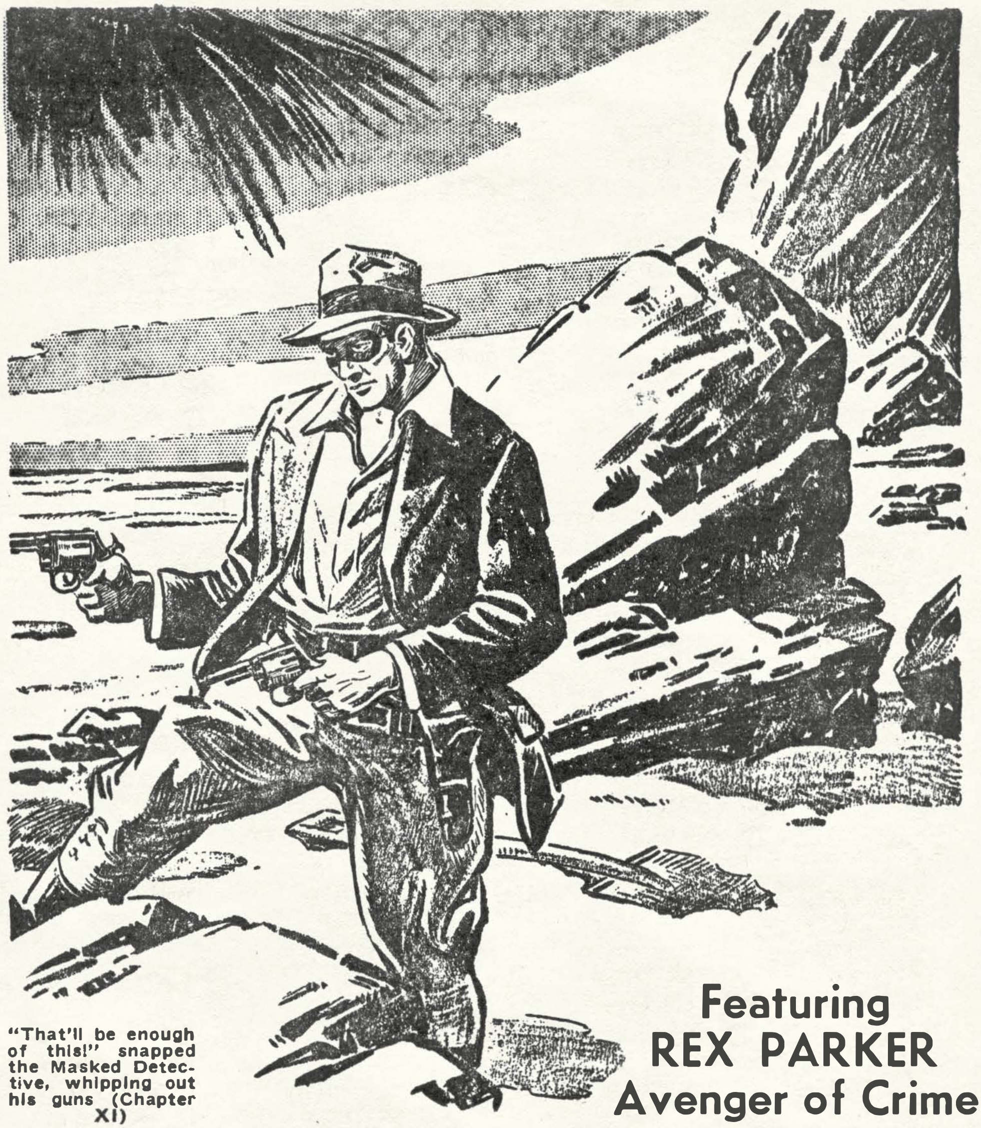
Author of "The League of the Iron Cross," "The Masked Detective's Manhunt," etc.

CHAPTER I

Phantom Tentacles

MOONLIGHT silvered the waters of the Gulf of Mexico as the cruise ship, *St. Lawrence,* sailed serenely through the placid summer night. Off to starboard, the island of Moaxacelo was a black blotch in the distance. A mysterious little isle too small to be found on ordinary maps, it nevertheless possessed more than its share of grim and gory legends.

Rex Parker Follows a Jungle Trail to Justice



"That'll be enough of this!" snapped the Masked Detective, whipping out his guns (Chapter XI)

Featuring
REX PARKER
Avenger of Crime

There had been a time when Moaxacelo had been part of the Spanish Main, when it had been a haven for ruthless freebooters, when pirates had steered their crafts to the safe harbor of the island's wild and rocky shores. But that had been long ago. Now the swords of dangerous, cruel men no longer flashed and grew red with life's blood in the pale light of the stars. The scrape of spades digging deep into freshly turned earth as the buccaneers hid their loot beneath the eerie glow of a waning moon was no longer heard.

Moaxacelo was said to be deserted, save for the tribe of Carib Indians that made their home there. Yet, at this very moment, the little island was reaching out its sinister spell like the searching tentacles of a phantom octopus. Invisibly it touched the cruise ship with one of its ghostly feelers and, in so doing, brought death

When Murder Engulfs an Expedition in Blood!

and real horror to the pleasure craft.

Another tentacle reached for a group of men who were in Mexico, preparing an expedition to explore the island in search of Indian relics for a Baltimore museum. To them it brought hate and greed and murder.

A third of the phantom feelers reached out for a captain of the Mexican Coast Guard, stationed in the little seaport town of Poljos. It drew him into the evil maw of death as it urged him to follow the bright, shining face of danger.

A fourth tentacle sought a man and a girl who stood on the promenade deck of the cruise ship, but this time the phantom octopus that reached out from the island of Moaxacelo grew hesitant. There was something about these two that warned of their ability to face peril bright-eyed and unafraid.

The man who stood at the rail on the port side of “B” deck was dark-haired and a little taller than average. He might have been mistaken for a movie star, yet Rex Parker was never conscious of his arresting appearance. As the ace crime reporter of the New York *Comet,* there were usually more important things on his mind.

The girl standing beside him was an amazing bit of femininity. She was nearly as tall as Parker, with raven-black hair worn rather short, and a supple, graceful form. Her eyes were clear blue, her lips exactly right. In fact, Rex Parker was sure that Winnie Bligh was just about perfect.

“I STILL can't get used to it, Rex,” she said, her voice clear and effortless above the lapping of the waves against the boat's sides, the faint strains coming from the dance orchestra playing in the main saloon. “If you had said we would be taking a vacation like this a week ago, I'd have been sure you were crazy.”

“I needed a rest, even if you didn't,” said Parker with a smile. “I've been working twenty-four hours a day—Twelve as the *Comet's* star reporter, and twelve as the Masked Detective.”

“And you loved it,” stated Winnie firmly.

“Of course I did. Humanity needs all the help it can get right now. I'm only sorry I'm not quintuplets and there aren't forty-eight hours in a day. Since you talked me into putting on a black velvet mask and using my knowledge of crime as the Masked Detective, we've worked on some mighty interesting cases. I don't begrudge a single minute of the time I used being what you and the newspapers like to call the ‘Scourge of the Underworld.’ But you're a slave-driver, Cap'n Bligh.”

“Won't you ever stop calling me that?” protested Winnie.

“The minute you stop acting like him.” Parker laughed. “Well, you won't have much to drive this slave. For ten days the Mask is taking a vacation.”

“I wonder if you can,” said Winnie. She shuddered involuntarily. “Rex, for the last hour I've had the strangest feeling. It's as if something terrible is going to happen, but I don't know what.”

“I've been feeling the same way,” Parker admitted. “But I guess—”

He broke off abruptly, staring out at the moonlit water. Winnie realized he had suddenly grown tense. Her slender fingers, catching his arm and clinging there, felt muscles that were bunched like steel springs.

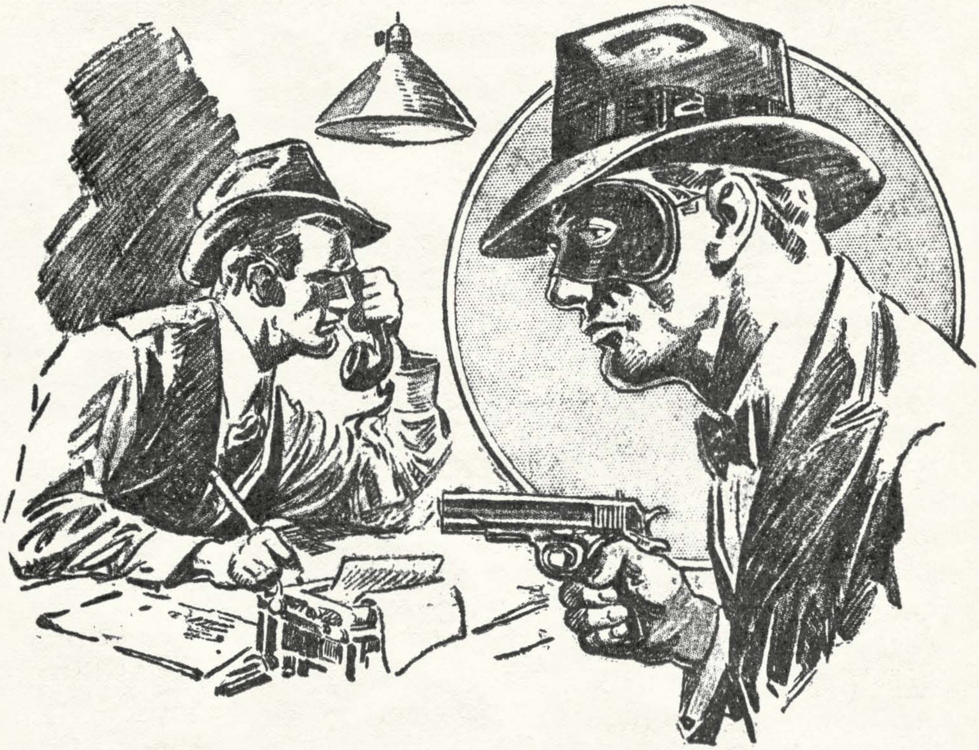
“What's the matter, Rex? What do you see?”

“Over to the left.” Parker's voice dropped, became hard and anxious. “See it? That dark object sticking up out of the water looks like a periscope.”

“A submarine?” she gasped. “You don't think the Nazis—”

She left the sentence unfinished, her fingers tightening on his arm. A long, dark shape had risen to the surface, water streaming off its glistening sides. Sinister and ominous in the silver light of the moon loomed a big submarine. Rolling slightly as the waves of the Gulf washed against its sides, it began riding closer to the *St. Lawrence.*

The other passengers on the port side of the cruise ship had seen the submarine. The sight brought the bloody horror of war to the front of their minds. Panic swept over them in an all-engulfing wave. Men shouted excitedly. Somewhere in the distance a woman's shrill scream rose to a wild crescendo.



REX PARKER, THE MASKED DETECTIVE

The crew of the *St. Lawrence* had been among the first to sight the sub and had gone into instant action. The captain had been called to the bridge. Every man on board was at his station, alert for whatever might happen. A second officer walked quietly along the deck, assuring the passengers that there was no danger. The deck stewards were doing the same thing below.

"No cause for alarm," they were instructed to say decisively. "Don't get excited, please. We're in neutral waters and there are U. S. warships not more than a few miles away."

The quiet air of the officer and the stewards was reassuring. The panic gradually subsided, but all eyes were still on the submarine, waiting and watching warily as it rode closer.

The conning tower hatch opened and a man in uniform climbed up, then down on the wet deck of the sub.

"*St. Lawrence* ahoy!" he called out. "Heave to. We're coming aboard!"

"Who are you?" shouted the first

officer as the cruise ship slowed her engines.

"U. S. submarine," came the an-answer. "S-twenty-seven. We've got a sick man on board, needs an operation right away. Can your ship's surgeon take care of him?"

"Of course," replied the captain. "Don't waste time coming aboard. Stay fast and we'll lower a boat."

AN officer barked a command. Men leaped to their position at one of the forward lifeboats on "A" Deck. The canvas cover was swiftly removed and the twelve sailors in the lifeboat crew climbed into the craft. The electric winch lowered it on automatic davits to the waters of the Gulf below.

"All right below!" shouted the third officer, in charge of the lifeboat. "Cast off!"

Ten of the men started rowing as the big lifeboat headed for the submarine. Another sailor was at the tiller, steering the boat from the stern, while the officer was stationed in the bow, ready for whatever might happen. The splashing of the oars was loud in the sudden silence.

"Something queer about this," said Rex Parker as he watched. The feeling of danger still lingered and his keen gaze missed nothing that went on. "I'd like to know why that sub was cruising below the surface before she sighted us. It doesn't seem natural, if they were really seeking aid for a sick man."

"That's true," Winnie said anxiously. "I'm positive there is something terribly wrong, Rex, but I can't quite explain it."

She watched worriedly as the lifeboat crew rowed closer to the sub. The S-27 now drifted quite some distance away from the cruise ship, which also seemed strange. The moon suddenly vanished behind a cloud. Parker and Winnie could no longer see what was going on out on the water. The submarine, in the temporary blackness, was only a shadowy bulk visible merely because of its size. The lifeboat was too small and low to be seen.

A faint shout came across the water, then silence. Time passed slowly—five minutes, ten, fifteen. Rex Parker waited impatiently, for he still felt there was something wrong, though he did not know exactly what. There was no real cause for suspicion. The shout was probably an order to the submarine crew. The delay was also to be expected in moving a sick man. But the darkness made the scene appear evil and malignant.

He breathed a sigh of relief when the bank of heavy clouds finally drifted away from the moon. The lifeboat was an intensely black blot in the silvery sheen as it headed back toward the ship. Oars flashed in and out of the water.

Parker watched narrowly, for there was something awkward in the way the lifeboat crew rowed. They had lost the trained precision they had displayed in taking the boat out to the sub. Their stroke was ragged and the big craft moved sluggishly.

It was his almost unbelivable powers of observation that had enabled Rex Parker to make the Masked Detective an overwhelming menace to all of crimedom. These faculties did not fail him now. He was watching intently as the lifeboat drifted close to the side of the cruise ship.

The crew members caught the cables that dangled from the davits and fastened them to either end of the boat, so it could be raised. But they handled the job with fumbling fingers. Some of them were cursing softly. They seemed unaccustomed to what should have been a routine task.

Slowly the electric winch began to draw up the lifeboat as the cables tightened. The boat came up the side of the steamship. For a few moments it was on a level with "B" Deck, before it was drawn on up to the boat deck above.

In the fleeting interval that had elapsed, Parker got a quick glance at the faces of the twelve men who were being raised with the lifeboat. He had instantly grown conscious of murderously glittering eyes, hard, brutal countenances that the turned up collars of the peajackets they wore could not conceal.

"Those men in the lifeboat!" Parker exclaimed. "They're not the same crew that took the boat out!"

"I know," said Winnie tensely. "I saw their faces. And there was no sick man in that boat."

"Come on!" snapped Parker. "We'll try to warn the ship's officers before it's too late."

He swung around, searching for sight of a uniformed figure, but none of the officers was visible on B Deck now. From above abruptly came the sounds he had feared and yet half-expected. It was the roar of gunfire. The pistol shots were loud in the silence that had previously descended, that Parker knew now had been the calm before a storm. Then, suddenly, the body of a uniformed man came hurtling down from the deck above and broke the water with a mighty splash.

"Let's go!" cried Parker as he raced toward the nearest door with Winnie running fleetly behind him. "Maybe we can help out somehow."

He glanced back over his shoulder as he reached the door. Two men dressed in sailor's uniforms had suddenly loomed into view up forward on the deck. They both carried automatics in their hands and were hard-looking customers. Two more men appeared at the stern end of the deck with deadly-looking submachine-guns in their hands.

"Stay where you are, all of you!" shouted one of them. "This is a stick-up! Don't move and you won't be hurt!"

"Pirates!" yelped one of the passengers. "That's what they are—pirates!"

CHAPTER II

Vacation With Pirates

PARKER and Winnie Bligh ducked in through the door before they were spotted by the four gunmen out on deck. They knew they had stepped into the ship's library, for books lined the walls. There was usually someone in attendance, but now the sole occupant of the room was a gray-haired man.

He glanced up with a frown. Apparently he had been so interested in the book he was reading that he had paid no attention to the ominous noises outside.

"Must you rush around like that?" he demanded petulantly. "You young people have no consideration for your elders. I don't know what the world is coming to. I really don't!"

"Sorry," said Parker, "but I'd advise you to hide somewhere in a hurry. There are men on board, raiding the ship."

"Raiding the ship? Nonsense! Please go away and leave me alone."

Rex Parker smiled grimly as he headed for the door that led from the library in the aft saloon. The petulant old gentleman was due for a real shock when some of the raiders found him.

Winnie closed the door of the library behind her as she followed Parker into the big lounge. It was deserted, for all of the passengers had rushed out on deck.

"Wait, Rex!" she called out. "I've got an idea. None of these men who are raiding the ship have seen you. If you could fight them as the Masked Detective—"

"That's it!" exclaimed Parker before she could finish. "You've got something there, Cap'n. And if I ever run across any of this gang again, I might be able to recognize some of them, even though they won't be able to know me by sight."

He reached into a secret pocket inside his coat and drew out the black velvet domino mask that he always carried with him since he had first assumed the rôle of the Masked Detective.

Generally, as in this case, there was little possibility of being recognized and the mask was enough protection. At other times, though, disguises were necessary. In this Winnie was a great help. Since she also conducted a beauty column on the New York *Comet,* she was an expert on make-up.

She often applied the unobtrusive cosmetics that changed the Mask's features so completely that no one had yet suspected he was Rex Parker, the paper's ace crime reporter.

"Better pretend you don't even know me, Winnie," he said as he adjusted the mask across the upper part of his face. "I wish I had a gun, but I left my automatic in the bag in my cabin."

"Then we'd better try to get down there and get it," advised Winnie. She hurried toward the door at the far end of the lounge. "Hurry!"

"What's the rush, sister?" demanded a big man, dressed in a ragged blue officer's uniform, who had suddenly loomed in the doorway. "You're not going anywhere." He glanced behind her and gave a startled gasp as he saw the Masked Detective. "Who are you?"

"The Mask," said the disguised figure's cold, deadly voice.

"Never heard of him," snarled the big man as Parker drew closer. "What is this—a gag?"

The Mask had trained himself in the art of *la savate,* the French method of fighting with the feet. His right leg flashed us as he came closer to the man in the doorway. His specially built shoe, with a hard, square toe, struck the big man's wrist and sent the automatic flying out of his injured hand.

Before the man from the submarine realized what had happened, he found himself covered by his own gun, held in the unwavering hand of the Mask. He cursed and was about to leap forward, but the dangerous glitter of the eyes that glared through the holes in the mask stopped him.

"Put your hands up!" ordered the Mask. "Are you a bunch of Fifth Columnists faking a raid on this ship?"

"Try and find out!" rasped the big man. "You won't get the answer from me."

"WHAT'S this—what's going on here?" The elderly man who had been in the ship's library came rushing across the lounge. "Oh, a holdup, eh?" he snapped as he saw the Masked Detective. "How dare you attempt to rob this officer?"

"Be quiet!" said Winnie quickly. "You don't know what this is all about."

"I have eyes, young lady," retorted the gray-haired man. "And I can see there is something wrong about this." He stepped between the Masked Detective and the man in the doorway. "Moreover I'll thank you to speak politely to your elders."

"Thanks, grandpa!" The uniformed thug grabbed the elderly man and held him in front as a shield. "I'm getting out of here. If you try and stop me with a slug, this old guy gets it."

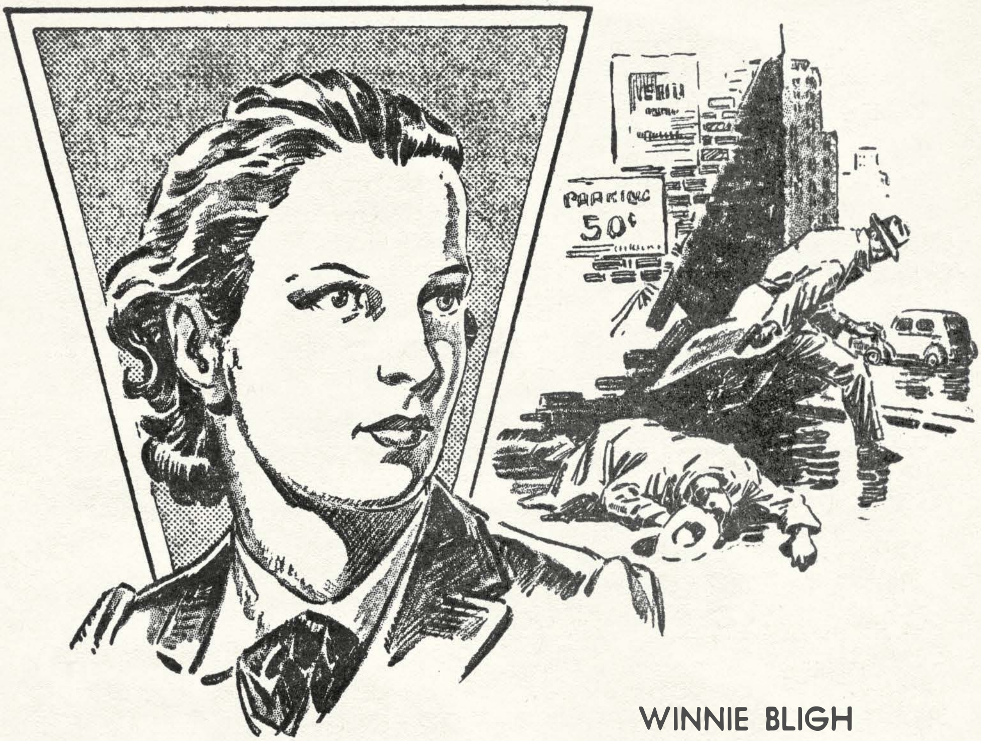
"Let me go!" fumed the old man. "I'll have you know that I'm Harvey Q. Martin—*the* Harvey Q. Martin. Take your hands off me!"

"Yeah?" said the big man, holding him in a firm clutch so that he could not get away. "And I'm 'Butch' Dugan—*the* Butch Dugan. So what?"

"Ameena!" breathed Martin softly.

"Oh!" gasped Dugan.

The old man managed to break free with surprising ease and scuttled



WINNIE BLIGH

across to the library door like a frightened rabbit. He dashed through and slammed the door behind him as he disappeared.

The Mask realized that if he fired the automatic, it would bring some of the other men from the submarine rushing to Butch Dugan's aid. Evidently the same idea had dawned on the big man, for he advanced with the glare of a killer in his eyes.

"Stay where you are!" ordered the Mask. "I'm warning you, if you come any closer, you'll get hurt."

"Sez who?" snarled Dugan.

He leaped forward. At the same instant the Mask flung the gun with all his force at Dugan. The heavy automatic struck the big man squarely between the eyes. He stumbled, fell flat on his face.

Winnie had disappeared out in the corridor. Parker had no idea where she had gone, but he felt sure that she could take care of herself. Perhaps she had felt it wise not to be seen with him while he was wearing the mask. Yet Harvey Q. Martin had seen them together and must realize that the girl was the same one he had encountered in the ship's library.

Heavy footsteps pounded in the corridor. The Masked Detective knelt down, reaching for the gun on the floor.

Just before he found it, the lights went out all over the ship. With the darkness, pandemonium reigned on board the *St. Lawrence*.

Women's shrieks could be heard all over the ship. Parker heard a constant roar of guns and the sounds of men fighting desperately in the inky blackness.

Though there were only twelve raiders, they were all heavily armed, ruthless killers, and they were leaving havoc in their wake.

The Mask fumbled in his pocket and pulled out a tiny flashlight. With the aid of the small beam, he searched for the gun on the floor. He found the automatic and picked it up.

OUTSIDE the door, a gun roared as one of the men from the submarine fired at the Mask. The bullet whistled by Parker's cheek. He hastily switched off the flashlight, realizing he made too good a target while it was on. He aimed the automatic at the spot from which he thought the shot had come and pulled the trigger.

"Missed him!" he muttered as he heard his bullet tear into soft wood.

From the corridor, a flash of flame licked at the darkness. The man out there was aiming at the spot Parker had occupied a moment ago, but the Masked Detective had leaped nimbly to one side the instant after he had fired.

He aimed at the flash and triggered the automatic again. He knew his aim had been better than the first time, for he heard the cry of a wounded man and then the *thump* of a falling body.

The turmoil on board was gradually subsiding. Women were no longer screaming and the sounds of fighting died away. But The Masked Detective found something foreboding in the increasing silence. He felt that it indicated a victory for the mysterious raiders.

He reached the corridor, groping his way through the darkness, for he did not dare to use the flashlight. The man he had shot out there might still be alive and the light made Parker visible to his foe.

A strange deathlike hush hung over the ship, a stillness that was more sinister than the sounds of conflict had been.

"Rex!"

Relief swept over Parker as he heard Winnie's voice coming out of the darkness. He had been worried about her ever since the lights had gone out. Even though he had believed she was able to take care of herself in time of danger, there were killers loose on this ship. They would not hesitate to shoot, if they found a girl in their way.

"Here I am, Winnie," he called softly. "What's happened?"

"The gang has everyone rounded up out on B Deck," she said. "They've killed the captain and five of the crew. I heard the pirates talking. I was hiding in a closet with the door locked on the inside. They didn't even suspect I was there."

The Mask advanced quietly toward her. His foot struck something soft. He reached down and found it was a body. Now that he could feel the inertness of his foe, he chanced using the flashlight. The man with whom he had fought was dead, a bullet in his chest.

"He tried to kill me," said Parker as he stood erect, his tone bitter. "I only meant to wound him."

"They've killed six men and wounded others," stated Winnie flatly. "Even some of the women are hurt. I'm not sorry this one is dead. They're like vicious rats that should be exterminated."

"If there was only some way we could stop what's going on out on deck!" the Mask exclaimed. "Come on, we'll try."

He led the way along the corridor until they reached the hall where the passenger elevators were. Here he risked using the flashlight again. The beam of white light flashed on the coil of fire hose which was hanging on the wall.

"I've got it!" whispered the Masked Detective. "There's a way of giving that gang plenty of trouble."

"How?" demanded Winnie excitedly.

"The fire hose. When the water is turned on full power, it has enough force to knock a man over. Here, hold the flashlight while I start unreeling that hose."

She took it from him. The Mask lifted the nozzle from the rack and began tugging on it. The hose swiftly unrolled from the metal reel.

"All right," said the Mask. "You stay here, Cap'n. Be ready to twist that wheel and turn on the water full force when I give you the word."

"I'd better start it at half-power into the hose now," said Winnie. "You can keep it shut off at the nozzle. When you want it, you'll want it fast."

She turned the wheel and there was strength in her slender arms. It moved easily under her touch. The hose was worked by automatic pumps in the engine room. There was plenty of pressure, even though the engines were now stopped.

The Mask reached an open door that led out onto the port side of B Deck, the hose held ready in his hands. As he glanced out, a strange sight met his gaze. All of the passengers and the crew were lined up in a huge group, while the raiders stood to one side near the rail, covering them with their guns.

"All right, lady!" growled a man who was going among the passengers with a bag in his hand. "Let's have them rings you're wearing. Make it fast. We ain't got all night to hang around here."

"Now!" called the Mask so softly that only Winnie heard him.

He felt the hose buck in his hands as the water surged through it. He turned the nozzle so that it was fully open. Instantly the full force of the water struck the nearest of the raiders, who was standing twenty feet away. It sent him hurtling backward over the rail and he went plunging down into the waters of the Gulf below.

"Get that guy with the hose!" shouted another of the men from the sub.

He fired as he yelled and the Mask ducked. A bullet whistled by his head. Rex Parker turned the hose on the man who had shouted the order. The rush of water caught him and flung him into the Gulf as though a giant hand had picked him up.

The Mask began turning the water on one man after another so swiftly that they were unable to use the weapons they held in their hands. Not all of them were tossed over the rail by the force of the water. Some were smashed against it and bruised and battered along the deck. Three of them managed to climb to their feet, then swung over the rail and jumped, rather than face the hose a second time.

An officer of the ship made a sudden dive and caught the raider who had been collecting the cash and jewelry in the bag. They hit the deck together, fighting wildly, fists pounding each other.

Of the twelve raiders, only ten had been on deck, for the Masked Detective had knocked out one and killed another. Eight of these nine had been knocked overboard by the hose. The second officer was struggling with the ninth man on the deck.

"Smart guy, eh?" a voice grated behind Parker.

Big, brutal fingers caught the Mask by the throat and tightened cruelly. Parker was forced to drop the hose. Water rushed across the deck and splashed under the feet of the passengers. A woman screamed inanely that her feet were getting wet.

The Mask realized that it must be Butch Dugan who had caught him. Evidently the big man was hardheaded enough to have regained consciousness quickly from the blow that the automatic had struck him. Dugan's fingers were digging into the flesh of Parker's neck, cutting off his breath.

"So you're the Mask, eh?" growled Dugan. "Well, you ain't gonna bother anybody when I get through with you."

THE Mask tried to grab Dugan's arms, but it was difficult with the big man standing behind him. He kicked out backward, trying to hit Dugan's ankles. The huge thug, however, was smart enough to stand so that his legs were not in much danger of being hit by the Mask's flying feet.

Parker was gasping for breath, for Dugan's strong fingers were cutting off his wind. Everything was going black. Then abruptly there came a dull *thud* from behind him. The fingers dropped away from his throat. As he whirled, panting, he saw Butch Dugan crash to the deck.

"A fire extinguisher is quite a weapon when you hit a man over the head with it," said Winnie Bligh.

The ship's crew had gone into action, most of them returning to their posts. The electric lights came on all over the ship. The stewards were herding the passengers to their cabins, politely suggesting a change of clothing to those who had been drenched by the water from the hose.

The Mask quickly slipped into the shadows, raced forward on B Deck. He removed the black velvet mask and stuck it in his secret pocket. He was sure that none of those on deck had realized it had been a masked man who had been handling the hose.

He glanced out at the water. Men were swimming to the submarine and being helped on board. The man who had been fighting with the ship's officer had managed to break away and leap over the rail.

From an open doorway along the deck, Rex Parker heard a low moan. Winnie joined him at once and caught his arm warningly as she heard the sound.

"In there," she said, motioning toward the door. "Sounds like someone has been hurt."

Parker went through the door with Winnie close behind him. Harvey Q. Martin was sprawled out in a big chair. His eyes were closed and blood stained the front of the white shirt he wore, for he had been dressed in a dinner jacket.

"Moaxacelo—great god Ameena—doubloons," the old man murmured weakly. "Four fingers—I"—he opened his eyes and glared about him wildly—"I was a fool!"

He shuddered and grew still.

"Dead!" said Parker softly. "I'm going to see my friend, Captain Jiminez Guerra of the Mexican Coast Guards, when we stop at Poljos in the morning. He wrote me that there were mysterious things happening on Moaxacelo Island. Now I'm certain there is some tie-up between the island and that sub with the killer crew."

"Oh, so you planned to see this friend of yours when we landed at Poljos!" exclaimed Winnie. Some of the ship's officers, passing the open door, discovered the dead man and took charge of the corpse. "And probably do a little investigating as the Masked Detective?"

"Sure." Parker grinned at her "All play and no work makes Rex a dull boy."

"And I thought we were on a vacation!" wailed Winnie. "I might have known it would turn out like this!"

CHAPTER III

Ameena

WITH the coming of dawn, the island of Moaxacelo brooded in the hot sunlight. The waters of the Gulf washed against its shores, its waves pounding against the cluster of rocks and boulders that guarded the jungle at the northern end of the island. The breakers rolled along the white sands of the beach to the southward, retreating hurriedly, as though afraid of the mountain that was like some giant beast crouching in the distance.

To the east, the dense thicket of brush and trees was like a ragged splash of grayish-green against the vivid blue of the sky. On the beach a group of Indians had silently loomed into view. They stood watching as the four white men leaped out into shallow water and dragged their motor dory onto dry sand.

"Go ahead, Ellis," ordered Jim Baker, leading the small party up the beach toward the silently waiting group of Indians. "You speak their lingo. Tell 'em we're okay and ask them to let us browse around the island a bit. Make it good."

Baker was heavy-set, with a touch of gray in his black hair, and he walked with a swagger.

"All right," said Ray Ellis. He strode forward, a big, powerful man with blond, curly hair and thick eyebrows. "But they look like they don't like it."

Ellis spoke a few words in the Carib dialect and listened while the spokesman for the Indians made his reply. It was obvious from the gestures that the chief made, in the way he waved at the mountain and then frowned, that he was far from pleased.

"What does he say?" demanded Baker impatiently.

Ellis turned to him and there was a somber expression in his deep-set eyes.

"He says that this is the home of the great god Ameena. Ameena is angry. He doesn't want white men on this island. If we stay, it means death."

"Death?" exclaimed a third member of the party, stepping forward. He was a lanky, sharp-nosed man with an unruly shock of brown hair. "I knew it! I told you I had a hunch about this place ever since we formed the expedition. Maybe we'd better not stay."

"Not afraid, are you, Ritchie?" asked Baker with a sneer.

"You know I'm not afraid of you." Bill Ritchie glared at him.

"Aw, forget it." Baker turned to Ray Ellis. "What does the chief mean? Is he saying the Indians will try and drive us off the island?"

Ellis again questioned the chief in the native dialect. The Indian grunted his reply. The tall man turned to the others, his expression still more serious than before.

"Says the Indians never hurt anyone," he explained. "Ameena takes care of all their enemies."

"I wonder if he's right," mused Howard Desmond, the fourth member of the expedition that had come in search of Indian relics for the Baltimore Museum. There was a frown on Desmond's handsome face. He ran his long, tanned fingers through his thick, blond hair. "A lot of weird things can happen where Indians are concerned."

"Not to me they can't," stated Baker, turning to the others with a grin. "Come on, boys. All we've got to look out for is a god named Ameena. If you meet anybody named Ameena, be sure to offer him a drink. Otherwise he might get sore."

Ellis and Ritchie looked at each other, then shrugged their shoulders as they followed Baker back to the boat. Desmond produced a package of cigarette papers and a bag of tobacco. Deftly he rolled a cigarette before joining the others.

THE four men began unpacking their light camping equipment from the motor dory that had brought them ashore from the ketch *Milrey,* lying out beyond the breakers.

"Maybe Cole and Woodley were wise in deciding to remain on board," said Ritchie. "I still have a mighty strange feeling about this place."

"Why shouldn't you feel that way about it?" Desmond smiled and looked younger than his thirty years. "Moaxacelo used to be a hideaway for the old Spanish pirates. I'll bet that many a man has died here on this island."

"Sure." Ritchie nodded. "And I keep thinking that one of us may be next."

The Indians watched them impassively. From time to time, one of the brown-skinned Caribs turned to look up toward the crest of the silent mountain that seemed to lean close over the beach.

"Ameena apparently lives up on that mountain top," said Ellis as he watched the Indians. "We're not likely to need to go anywhere near there, though, so it won't matter. But I wouldn't wander around the island too much until we get to know the lay of the land. There may be tribal taboos that'll spell trouble for us."

"Trouble from these Indians?" snorted Jim Baker. "Don't be silly. I could lick a dozen of them with one hand."

Ellis gave him a level stare and turned back to the job he was doing. He untied the rope wrapped around a tarpaulin.

"If I were you, Baker," he said quietly, "I wouldn't be too contemptuous of these Indians. They're bad boys to play with when they get stirred up."

The thick-set man reached into the boat for an ax. As he straightened up, his heavy face wore a nasty grin.

"Bring on your Ameena and your Indians," he challenged. "I'm ready for them."

Ellis scowled and said nothing. Ever since the expedition had been formed in Baltimore, he had developed a gradually increasing dislike for the swaggering, blustering Jim Baker. The thick-set man was obviously a hardened adventurer, always on the lookout for trouble. If he didn't find any, he was likely to start something merely for the sake of a fight. He was a dangerous man to have on an expedition such as this, for he was sure to antagonize the Indians merely by his blustering, superior attitude.

As an archeologist who had been on expeditions in many countries and many lands, Ray Ellis felt that the five men who had come with him to Moaxacelo Island were an odd quintette to be interested in ancient Indian lore. Yet George Bliss Cole, the millionaire head of Cole Products, had personally selected all of these men when he had agreed to finance the expedition.

Cole himself had come along merely for the adventure it promised. He was spending most of his time on board the ketch, waiting for a friend of his to arrive, another millionaire named Harvey Q. Martin. Little Arthur Woodley, Cole's rabbit-like secretary, was on the *Milrey* with his employer. Ellis felt that was just as well, for the jittery, pallid-faced Woodley would doubtlessly be in a state of constant panic if he had been here on the island.

"LOOK at this!" exclaimed Howard Desmond, reading part of a neswpaper that had been wrapped around a bundle of tinned goods that had been brought from the ship. "Here's an article by that chap, Rex Parker, who does those stories he gets from the Masked Detective."

"Who's the Masked Detective?" asked Baker.

"I've heard of him," said Ritchie. "From all reports, this Mask is quite a man. No one knows who he is and the only way it's possible to contact him is through Rex Parker. Parker is the star crime reporter on the New York *Comet*."

"Swell!" said Jim Baker ironically. "Maybe we'd better send for the Masked Detective to track down the great god Ameena."

"You can kid around all you want," answered Desmond, still reading the newspaper, "but I've got a lot of respect for the Mask. In this article, Parker tells how the Mask fought it out with a league of crooked servants controlled by a sinister overlord of the underworld. They were committing crimes all over the country until the Mask stepped in and cleaned out the whole bunch."

"All of which has very little to do with our getting a camp ready so we can do a little exploring today," said

Ellis. "Come on, let's get things moving."

They went to work, quickly put up a big tent on the beach to the north, not far from the edge of the jungle. It was noon, however, before they had their camp established to their complete satisfaction. Most of the Indians had disappeared, but Ellis was sure some of them were lurking close by, watching every move that the white intruders made.

The four men made a brief foray into the jungle during the afternoon. Then, one by one, the expedition members returned to the camp on the beach just before dusk descended over the wild tangle of palms, creepers, ferns and vines that cloaked Moaxacelo up to the very base of the mountain.

The men cooked and ate their supper, then sat around the fire for a time, talking. Finally Desmond yawned and got to his feet.

"Guess I'll turn in," he said, shuffling away wearily. "I'm sleepy."

He disappeared inside the tent.

Ellis refilled his pipe and lighted it. He strolled down to the water's edge and stood there, staring out across the Gulf of Mexico. He wasn't in the least tired and he was anxious to be alone with his own thoughts. Back at the fire, Jim Baker had been telling of impossibly heroic feats with himself as the protagonist. Ellis had found he couldn't stand any more of the man's unmitigated boasting.

He walked slowly south along the beach, sat down on a rock and sat there smoking. He had been there less than ten minutes when a flash of green light caught his eye. He looked back across the island toward the mountain top. From the highest crest of the craggy, pointed mountain peak rose an eerie green fire, shooting higher and higher into the windswept air. It coated the whole island with a ghastly radiance that Ellis could hardly believe was real.

"What the—" he gasped, springing to his feet.

In front of the green flame there rose the figure of a man, yet no man in the history of the world had ever been so huge. It was impossible. He seemed to rise out of the very rock and stone of the mountain peak, growing taller and taller until, when he reached his full height, he must have been at least twenty feet high. He wore some kind of loose robe and his silhouette was ragged, as though the robe were trimmed with feathers. His arms moved up and down slowly, giving the impression that the figure on the crest was proclaiming some unholy benediction on the island.

"I don't believe it," muttered Ellis, stumbling vaguely toward camp. "I must be seeing things. It must be some trick. I—"

He stopped as a sonorous voice boomed out in the silence of the night and rolled down the side of the tower-

[*Turn page*]

A BIG O.K. FROM U.S.A.
PEPSI-COLA
A SPARKLING BEVERAGE
PEPSI-COLA
5¢
PEPSI-COLA
Pepsi-Cola is made only by Pepsi-Cola Company, Long Island City, N. Y. Bottled locally by authorized bottlers.

ing mountain like the rumble of great boulders. The incredible voice battered at the ears of Ray Ellis.

"I am Ameena!" it boomed, louder than thunder. "Ameena!"

FROM the Indian village at the foot of the mountain came a roar from the entire tribe, yet it was not as loud as that single unhuman voice.

"Ameena!"

"God of Death!" continued the gigantic monster. "God of Destruction! All must obey me. White men are the enemies of Ameena. You must not let them stay here. Ameena has spoken!"

The enormous figure on the mountain top dropped its arms like a man suddenly grown tired. The green flame abruptly winked out. Blackness, complete and terrifying, clamped down over the island.

To his right, Ellis caught a bright flash. The wild scream of a man in mortal agony slashed through the still night air. The horrible shriek broke off with a strange brittleness, as though the man who had uttered it had died horribly before the sound had stopped issuing from his throat.

Ellis raced along the beach, snatching out the .45 automatic he wore in a holster on his hip. He reached the camp, saw that two of the other men were running toward the jungle. He increased his speed and caught up with them.

"It's Ritchie!" panted Desmond. "He went for a walk right after you did, Ellis. Something's happened to him!" The blond man was wearing pajamas, but he had put on his shoes and carried a powerful flashlight in his hand. "The cry came from over this way!"

The beam of the flash cut a white swath through the tangled growth of the jungle. The three men were forced to slow their pace. Without machetes, it was painful work, forcing their way past snarled creepers, thorny undergrowth and fallen trees. At last they reached a clearing, in the center of which was a high, carved rock.

"Look!" yelled Desmond in horror.

Bill Ritchie's body was lying on the rock. It had been burned almost to a crisp. His arms and legs were merely stumps and his torso was a terrible mass of blisters. Only his face was intact. It seemed as though whoever had killed him had purposely left the face untouched, so that anyone who found him would be certain of his identity.

"Ameena!" cried Howard Desmond, his features contorted. "Ritchie told you there was something wrong on this island, Baker. He didn't want to stay here, but you laughed at him. Laughed at him—and now he's dead—like that. I wish it had been you, instead!"

"Shut up!" snarled Baker. "No sniveling kid can talk to me like that. Shut up, I tell you, or I'll crack you in the jaw!"

"Quiet, both of you." Ellis spoke in a tight, hard voice. His automatic was in his hand. "Bill Ritchie was my friend. If you don't keep still, I'll put a bullet in you both. This is murder!"

"Murder?" repeated Baker, gaping. His jaw suddenly jutted threateningly. "You mean you think one of us killed him?"

"I don't know who killed him, or how," said Ellis harshly. "But I'm going to have the authorities here to find out."

"What authorities?" asked Desmond.

"There are Mexican Police in Poljos," Ellis replied. "There is also a coast guard station there. I'll find someone to take care of this."

"A lot of good that will do you, if it was Ameena," said Jim Baker with a hard laugh. "Maybe you'd better sic that Masked Detective of yours on the Indian god. He certainly ought to be able to clear this up in no time at all."

CHAPTER IV

Calling the Masked Detective

LIGHTNING flickered beyond the horizon and thunder rumbled in the sky. The palms on the *prado* of the seaport town of Poljos bent beneath the fierce gusts of wind that swirled up out of the Gulf. Swirls of dust rose from the baking village square and whirled themselves off into oblivion. The coppery sky deepened in color and the wind grew stronger.

Boats in the Poljos harbor bobbed and tossed. The cruise ship *St. Lawrence* was among them, but she merely rolled gently from side to side as the water became rougher. A few fishing boats scuttled through the opening in the breakwater and pitched their way inshore, listing deeply before the increasing pressure of the gale. The streets of Poljos emptied themselves in anticipation of the deluge that was sure to follow the whipping wind and the lowering clouds.

In a squat white building, marked by a plaque with the emblazoned spread of the Mexican eagle, Captain Jiminez Profilio Guerra y Sanchez sat at his desk. A wild expression was in his eyes and his hands trembled slightly.

The captain was convinced that he was going mad. The past twenty-four hours had proved a nightmare. First the cruise ship *St. Lawrence* had sailed into the harbor with a grim tale of horror. The crew had babbled of pirates who had raided the ship from a submarine, of men who had been killed and passengers who had been wounded.

But that was not all. Again the officers of his coast guard patrol boats were reporting seeing strange green lights on the island of Moaxacelo, a huge god that appeared at night on the top of the mountain on the island. A man named Ellis had just come from the island with a weird tale of murder.

"Call the hotel!" shouted the captain excitedly. "Have the *senor* Rex Parker come here. Tell him it is me, Captain Guerra, that demands it. Tell him—"

"Tell him what?" asked Rex Parker as he stepped in through the open door of the inner office. "You seem excited, Jiminez. Have you discovered anything new about that pirate sub?"

"Get out," the captain said to the attendant. "This is the *senor* Parker. You do not need to phone the hotel now."

The coast guard office worker stepped hastily out of the room, closing the door behind him. The captain sank back into the chair at his desk. He was a short man, as bulbous as the straw-covered bottle that he produced from a desk drawer. His face was round and held a ferocious black mustache, which seemed oddly out of place with the rest of his usually merry and twinkling features.

"I have discovered nothing but more trouble," complained Captain Guerra as he drew out two glasses. "The coast guard is investigating. The United States Navy is investigating. And what has been found? Nothing! We only know that the submarine was not the S-Twenty-seven."

"Right." Parker nodded. "They checked and found the S-Twenty-seven had been laid up in drydock for repairs for the past two months. Then what has happened?"

"Murder on Moaxacelo," groaned the captain. "But wait. Now that you are here, I will let these men tell their story over again. They will be impressed. I am your friend and you are the one person who can contact this so-great Masked Detective. Perhaps you might be willing to go with me while we investigate this island, *si?*"

"Si," Parker agreed. "I told you I would, but remember that I'm just a crime reporter. The Mask isn't with me here at the moment." He smiled. "But perhaps he might be interested. We shall see."

"Good," said Guerra. "And the beautiful *senorita,* the so-lovely Miss Winnie Bligh, what of her?"

"If I know anything about Winnie, she'll probably insist on going with us," replied Parker, his smile widening to a grin. "But let's talk to these men you mentioned."

THE captain pushed a bell, bellowed a command the instant the door opened. Immediately Ray Ellis and Howard Desmond were ushered into the office. Parker studied the two men as he was introduced. There was a look of surprise on their faces when they heard his name.

"Rex Parker of the New York *Comet?"* demanded Ellis.

"That's me." Parker smiled as he shook hands with the tall man. Here, he decided, was a good friend to know and a bad enemy to make. "I didn't know bad news traveled so far."

"We were reading one of your news stories about the Masked Detective on the island yesterday," explained Desmond. "That was about—" the young, blond-haired man hesitated with a frown—"before it happened."

"Before what happened?" asked Parker.

"Before we found poor Ritchie's body," supplied Ellis.

"Sit down, both of you." Parker waved toward a couple of chairs and the two men dropped into them. "Now tell us about it."

Ellis talked swiftly, explaining that he and Desmond were among the six men who had come to the island as part of the expedition for the museum. He told of having seen the green glare light up the entire island, and of the giant figure he had seen on the mountain top.

"Did you see this figure, too?" Parker asked Desmond as Ellis paused.

"No, I didn't," said Desmond. "I was in the tent, trying to get to sleep, when I heard Ritchie cry out in agony. I did notice the strange green light, though."

"Did you explore the mountain?"

Ellis shook his head. "This happened last night, as I said. When we discovered the body of Bill Ritchie, we couldn't think of anything else."

"Ritchie was murdered?"

"He must have been!" exclaimed Desmond. "We found his body back in the jungle and he had been burned to a crisp. Only his face was recognizable. It was horrible!"

"Ritchie was my friend." Ellis spoke quietly, but there was a bitter note in his tone. He looked tired. "That was why I insisted upon coming here this morning to report to the authorities."

Captain Guerra glanced at the rain that the wind lashed against the window panes. A flash of lightning made a vivid streak across the sky. Thunder broke with a deafening crash. The tropical storm had swept over Poljos in all its fury.

"This is too much!" shouted the captain in disgust. "Pirates raiding a ship, weird things happening on the island, and now it rains!"

"Pirates?" exclaimed Howard Desmond in surprise. "What do you mean?"

"It is the *senor* Parker who can tell you better than I," said Captain Guerra. "He was on the ship when it happened last night."

Rex Parker nodded as Ellis and Desmond looked at him questioningly.

"Captain Guerra is right," he said.

He told what had happened on the *St. Lawrence,* of the mysterious submarine and the raiders who had come on board. He merely stated that the raiders had been driven off the ship when a fire hose had been brought into use. He did not mention that he had been the one who had handled the hose, nor did he give the slightest indication that the Masked Detective had battled the raiders on the cruise ship.

"ONE old man on board was deliberately murdered," finished Parker. "A man named Harvey Q. Martin—"

"Harvey Q. Martin?" interrupted Ellis. "That's George Cole's friend—the man that Cole has been waiting for to join us on the island. And you say that Martin was murdered?"

"He was," stated Parker. "We found him dying from a knife wound in his chest. As he died, he muttered: 'Moaxacelo — great god Ameena—doubloons,' and then something about four fingers and his being a fool."

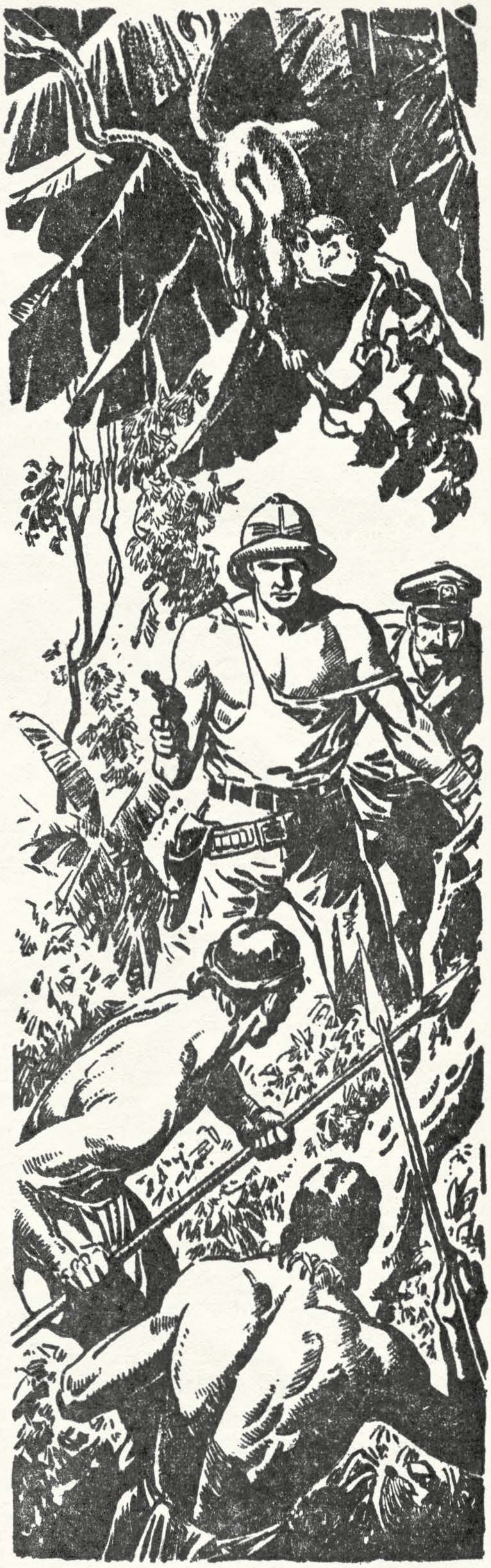
"Strange." Desmond glanced quickly at Ellis and glanced away as quickly when he found the big man was staring at him. "But who killed him?"

"It could have been one of the raiders," answered Parker thoughtfully, "a tough guy named Butch Dugan. Dugan was knocked out with a fire extinguisher. He was hit over the head with it, but he managed to break away from the ship's crew later and dive over the side."

"The rest of our party is still waiting out on the island," said Ellis. "Naturally we are anxious to have someone in authority go back to Moaxacelo with us and investigate."

"That is to be expected!" The captain stepped to one side of his chair and drew himself up proudly. He was so short and stocky that he appeared to the men in front of the desk as though he were still sitting down. "Me, Captain Jiminez Profilio Guerra y Sanchez, will attend to this personally. We shall return to the island in my private yacht." He glanced anxiously at Rex Parker. "All of us."

"All of us," agreed Parker with a nod. "As a crime reporter, this mystery interests me. Seems like there might be a good newspaper story in it. I've already sent a radio report of


Indians swarmed out of the Jungle (Chapter VI)

the raid on the cruise ship to my paper. Fortunately there is a young lady here who is also a feature writer on the New York *Comet*. She was on the cruise ship. Her name is Miss Winnie Bligh." He smiled. "I hope you gentlemen will not object if she accompanies us to the island."

"Well, all right," said Ellis doubtfully. "But a woman on Moaxacelo? I'm afraid that may mean more trouble."

There was a soft knock on the closed door of the office. The captain glanced toward the door with a frown and barked the order to enter. The door opened and Winnie Bligh stood there, a transparent cellophane raincape over her head and protecting her clothing.

"Sorry to intrude, Captain," she said with a seductive smile, "but I have an important message for Mr. Parker."

All four men had leaped to their feet the moment they had seen the tall, dark-haired girl. Howard Desmond was studying her with eager interest, obviously impressed by her beauty. Ray Ellis stood gazing at her narrowly.

"Miss Winnie Bligh, gentlemen," introduced Parker. "Miss Bligh, may I present Mr. Ellis and Mr. Desmond?"

"Now I'm positive there will be more trouble on the island," declared Ellis.

"I'm afraid I don't understand, Mr. Ellis," said Winnie, laughing. "I appear to have come in during the middle of the feature picture, or was it only an animated cartoon?"

"Mr. Ellis seems to feel that such an attractive girl would not be safe on the Island of Moaxacelo," said Desmond gallantly. "But I'm sure he is mistaken, with all of us to protect you, Miss Bligh."

"Thank you." Winnie smiled gratefully at the blond man, then drew a cable blank from her purse and handed it to Parker. "This came for you, Rex. It seemed important."

Parker took the cable and glanced at it.

CRUISING FOR WHAT I HAD HOPED WOULD BE A REST IN MEXICAN WATERS. WILL CONTACT YOU LATER AND WILL BE WORKING IN DISGUISE.
THE MASKED DETECTIVE.

PARKER'S expression did not change. He knew that Winnie had typed the message on the portable typewriter she would never leave behind, even on a cruise. He felt that bringing the apparently real cablegram to him here in the captain's office, as she had done, was a smart move. It gave him the opportunity to assume the character of the Masked Detective after they reached the island, if he found it necessary.

"This is important," said Parker. "Listen." He read the cablegram aloud, then concluded: "That's a relief. I'm afraid we may need the Masked Detective's help before this whole business is cleared up."

"You're right," said Ellis emphatically.

Desmond nodded.

"I think Mr. Parker is mean," exclaimed Winnie, pouting. "The Mask contacts him and tells him about all his cases, but Rex won't even tell me who the Mask is!"

"Because I can't tell you," said Parker with a grin. "I've never seen him without the mask, or in disguise, so I don't know who he is myself."

The thunder had died away and the lightning no longer flashed, but the rain still poured down steadily. Suddenly from outside the nearest window came the roar of a gun. The glass shattered as a bullet plowed through it and *thudded* into the wall of the office, not far from Rex Parker's head.

"Down, Winnie!" he shouted snapping out the automatic that he was wearing in a shoulder holster. "Duck, all of you!"

Captain Guerra had moved with remarkable speed. A heavy .45, appearing in his hand as if by magic, roared as he fired at a shadowy figure out in the rain. In a sudden lull in the downpour, they could all hear the patter of swiftly running feet. The person who had fired the shot was making a hasty getaway.

"Apparently someone in Poljos has taken a dislike to you, Parker," said Desmond quietly. "I hope it wasn't one of our party on the island."

"Why should it be?" demanded Ellis sharply.

"Frankly I don't know," admitted Desmond, "unless they object to having Ritchie's murder investigated. After all, Parker is the only one among us who could even hope to contact the Masked Detective."

"I think I'll sit down," said Winnie, dropping into a chair. "I feel a little weak."

Parker pretended to be as anxious about her as the other men, who were bringing her water, fanning her with their hats and chafing her wrists. Actually he knew she enjoyed the attention.

"You'll get a real vacation after this is finished," he promised in a whisper as soon as he had a chance.

He grinned as she stood up, abruptly recovering from her faintness.

CHAPTER V

The Devil's Drink

IT was several hours later when Captain Guerra's trim little yacht *San Marco* entered the harbor of the island of Moaxacelo and hove to within a few yards of the ketch *Milrey*. The captain had brought a crew of six picked men with him. Parker, Winnie and the two men from the museum expedition were also on board.

No trace of the assassin who had tried to kill Parker had been found in Poljos, though the police and the coast guards had searched the town as soon as the storm subsided.

Accompanied by Captain Guerra and Ellis, the crime reporter from the New York *Comet* scrambled up the ladder over the side of the large sailing vessel. Desmond had remained on board the yacht with Winnie.

The three were met by a silent group of men who were huddled aft on the ketch. Ellis led the rotund Mexican coast guard officer and Rex Parker down the deck of the ketch to introduce his companions on the expedition which had been interrupted by a horrible murder.

First to shake hands with Parker was the thick-set, heavy-featured man whom Ellis had mentioned in his account of the landing at Moaxacelo—the swaggering adventurer, Jim Baker. As Parker gripped the man's hand and looked into the close-set eyes, he found that the face seemed familiar.

"Haven't I met you before, Mr. Baker?" he asked.

Baker peered closer at him before shaking his head in a negative gesture.

"Afraid not," he said. "I've been hanging around Baltimore quite a lot lately. Might have seen you at one of the Chesapeake Bay regattas, if you're interested in boats."

"Don't believe that was it," answered Parker. "It doesn't matter, though."

He turned to meet the next member of the *Milrey's* crew, an elderly man with graying hair and bright, snapping blue eyes.

"Mr. Cole," Ellis said. "George Bliss Cole."

Parker nodded as he shook hands. He had bad news for this man. Parker had to tell him that his friend Harvey Martin had been murdered. But that should come at a dramatic point, unless Ellis or Desmond mentioned it first.

"Of Cole Products, of course," the

reporter said. "I recognize you from the newspaper photographs."

"This is Arthur Woodley, my secretary," said Cole, introducing the last of the six men who had originally formed the expedition.

Woodley was an undersized individual with a narrow, pallid face. His receding chin and protruding teeth gave him the appearance of a rabbit, a resemblance that was increased by his attitude of panic. His eyes roved ceaselessly even while he shook hands with Parker and Guerra. From time to time he glanced nervously over his shoulder, as though afraid something might be creeping up behind him.

"G-glad you're here," Woodley stammered. "Awful thing—terrible. I don't think we should stay here another minute. Who knows who might be next?"

Parker shot the timid man a sharp glance before he spoke. It almost seemed that Woodley was too frightened. It was possible that Cole's secretary was overacting.

"I'm afraid Captain Guerra will insist that you stay here until we get this case cleared up."

"That is true," agreed the captain quickly. "No one must leave here now."

WOODLEY started to speak, but was cut short by Ellis.

"Suppose we go down into the cabin. We've got—poor Ritchie's body down there."

The men trooped down into the spacious cabin of the ketch. Lying on a low bunker that ran the length of one side of the cabin was a bulky object wrapped in tarpaulin. Ray Ellis moved directly to the grotesque vaguely horrible bundle and threw back a flap of the sail-cloth. Woodley shrank back in terror. Cole turned away, his eyes bleak. Baker looked stolidly at the face of the dead man as Captain Guerra and Parker drew nearer.

Bill Ritchie had been a man of about forty-five, yet his shock of brown hair made him seem oddly boyish even in death. His eyes were wide and staring and his face was twisted in a frightful grin of agony. Parker realized that this man had stared into the face of death and had seen his ghastly fate too late to evade it.

"You'll notice that whoever did it was careful to keep his face from being burned," pointed out Ellis bitterly. "But the rest of him—"

The archeologist broke off with a shudder. Parker moved the tarpaulin away and took a brief glance at the ruin of Ritchie's body. Ellis had not exaggerated. The man literally had been burned to a crisp. Despite himself, Rex Parker shivered as he realized the unbearable pain that Ritchie must have experienced before death mercifully cut short his suffering.

Parker covered the body and turned back to the others in the cabin. He looked at Baker and Cole.

"Suppose you tell me the story of this expedition from the beginning," he said. "Ellis and Desmond told the captain and myself a little about it, but we would like to know more."

"As far as we know," replied Cole, "this island never has been explored for Indian relics. We six—five now—got together in Baltimore, our home town, and made up this expedition more as a vacation than anything else—"

"Except for Baker and me," interrupted Ellis. "I'm here officially as the archeologist for the museum. Jim Baker happens to be a good pilot and knows these waters."

Parker's eye flickered around the circle of men in the cabin. What was the veiled emotion he saw written in the eyes of George Cole? Was the elderly man's frown simply annoyance at having been interrupted? Was the gleam in Woodley's eyes merely fear? And why was Jim Baker biting his lip?

"And what did you intend to do with the treasure you were hunting for?" Parker asked them very quietly.

Woodley jumped as though he had been stuck by a pin. Cole frowned more deeply than before, and Ellis looked puzzled. Jim Baker gave a short laugh.

"Nothing at all," he said. "We're not fooling ourselves into thinking we'll find treasure. We hoped to get some good Indian pieces that we might give to the Baltimore Museum, back home."

"That's right," added Cole hastily. "I happen to be a director of the museum, so I have been financing this trip. We know we won't find any treasure, so we aren't looking for it."

"No?" There was a mocking gleam in Rex Parker's eyes. "Then why did your friend, Harvey Q. Martin, die mumbling about doubloons when he was murdered?"

"Harvey Martin murdered!" For an instant stark terror flashed across George Cole's face, leaving him old and shaken. Parker saw the effort he had to make to gain control of himself. "What are you talking about?"

PARKER told him swiftly how Martin had been found, stabbed, after the raiders had been driven off the *St. Lawrence*. Again he repeated the dying man's words. He saw that Ellis was watching the three other men, as though curious about their reaction to the story that the archeologist had heard before.

"You're sure Martin said 'Ameena?'" demanded Cole. "That's supposed to be the name of the Indian god of the island."

"He said Ameena, all right," stated Parker. "I'm positive of it. He also said something about 'four fingers.'"

"Four Fingers!" exclaimed Jim Baker. "The Devil's Drink!"

The thick-set man scowled when he noticed that the others were all gazing at him. Captain Guerra's bright eyes gleamed.

"What is these 'Devil's Drink,' *Senor* Baker?" he asked.

"Nothing," said Baker hastily. "just an expression I picked up in the tropics. It means that four fingers of rum is a powerful drink, that's all."

Parker felt that Baker was lying, but he did not ask any further questions. Dusk had descended with the suddenness of the tropics while the group had been talking in the *Milrey's* cabin. Parker glanced at Guerra and an unspoken message passed between the two men.

The Mexican rose and yawned.

"There seems to be nothing we can do tonight," he said. "Tomorrow we will look over the ground and talk with the Indians."

"It's the Indians, all right!" Woodley assented eagerly. "They warned us to stay off the island. When some of us stayed there, they killed poor Ritchie, just as they'll kill the rest of us if we don't leave here."

Guerra shrugged. "I think you're safe enough on your boat. If an Indian did kill your friend, it should be easy to find the guilty one. These Caribs have a strong belief in truthfulness. I have found they would rather suffer torture than tell a lie."

"An Indian's an Indian," Baker said. "Personally, I wouldn't trust one of them any farther than I could see him."

"Maybe they wouldn't trust you, either," said Captain Guerra.

He followed Parker to the deck of the *Milray* and into the dinghy of the *San Marco*.

A few minutes later the two men were again on board the captain's yacht. Winnie had been standing at the rail, awaiting their return. Meanwhile she had been taking to Howard Desmond.

Desmond hailed the ketch. One of the men rowed over and took him back to his own ship.

"What a relief!" exclaimed Winnie when he was gone. "That man has been handing me a romantic line that's left me a little ga-ga. It hardly seemed the time or place for it."

"No time or place would be right for them," said Parker angrily. "Not one of those five men can be depended on to tell you even the correct time."

Captain Guerra had gone to talk to his men, leaving Parker and Winnie alone on the deck.

"Why, Rex!" she said, laughing softly. "You actually sound as though you're jealous."

"Not at all," he denied. "It's just that I don't trust any of that crew. Listen, Cap'n, those raiders in the sub could have come from the island—and one man has been murdered here. We're into something up to our necks and the water is pretty muddy."

"Any suspicions?" asked Winnie eagerly.

"Plenty. There's work here for the Masked Detective all right, Cap'n, and I suspect it will be dangerous for all of us."

"Good!" cried Winnie. "As soon as I got over my disappointment at losing a vacation, I hoped it would be." She suddenly gasped and caught his arm. "Rex, look!"

THEY stared across the water at the dark bulk of the island. At the top of the silent, brooding mountain rose a column of ghostly green flame. It shot up at least twenty feet into the air and then dropped to a dull, guttering glimmer. Abruptly it winked out into blackness.

"You saw it, *Senor* Parker?" demanded Captain Guerra as he hurried out on deck. "That is the green light of which they talk so much!"

"Yes, I saw it," snapped Parker. "Come on, Jiminez. I don't know what it is, but we are going to find out." He glanced at Winnie. "You'll be safer here, Cap'n. Besides, Jiminez and I can move faster through the jungle without you. We'll be back soon."

"All right," said Winnie, shrugging. "But I hate to miss anything and it looks exciting."

CHAPTER VI

The Talking Skull

AT Parker's direction, Guerra beached the dinghy far down the shore from the sleeping Indian village. Around the place where Parker directed the Mexican captain to head the boat in, the forest grew down almost to the water's edge. The two men tied up the dinghy and plunged into the jungle, heading for the mountain peak. It was risky going in the blackness, but until they were deep into the tangle of vegetation, Parker advised against using the flashlights both men carried.

"No sense letting anybody know we've gone ashore, if we can help it," he explained. "I'm not too trustful of that crowd."

"Ah, then you think like me," panted the chunky captain.

It was a tortuous journey that the two men made as they climbed the first slopes of the looming mountain through the stubborn undergrowth. Twice they heard the thrashing of some animal or snake as it made its way through the ferns and vines of the thick jungle. Once Guerra gave a startled squawk when a huge bat dipped low, brushing the Mexican's face with its leathery wings.

"Bats!" yelped Guerra, disgusted. "Snakes, bats, a Aztec murder and submarine raiders. *Por Dios*, the life of a captain of the Mexican Coast Guard indeed is difficult!"

The palms thinned out as the mountain grew steeper, until at length the two men were standing on a slope that was completely bare of vegetation. Parker stooped and picked up a handful of the crumbly soil. He trained his flashlight on the grayish earth and examined it.

"Lava," he said, "old lava—very old."

"Maybe *Senor* Ritchie might have stumbled into a hot spring which might be somewhere on the island, fed by the volcano," suggested the Mexican.

"And was carried by the hot spring to that old stone the others said they found him on?" asked Parker. "No, Jiminez, I'm afraid that won't do."

"True," admitted Guerra. "I had forgotten that." A moment later he said quickly: "But he could have fallen into a hot spring and been found by someone and carried to the stone!"

"Carried by whom?" asked Parker. "The natives?"

"Perhaps. These Indians, they have funny minds. They do strange things."

"It's worth thinking about, anyway," Parker said thoughtfully. "If these Caribs are as truthful as you say they are, we should find out soon enough."

He was glad that his work as the Masked Detective had kept him in first-class physical shape, for this climb was a trying one and the captain was fat and flabby. Together the two men made their laborious way to the top of the mountain peak, Parker stopping every now and then to give Guerra a helping lift or a boost over a particularly rough stretch of traveling.

At length they reached the summit of the mountain. They found themselves on the rim of a black hole which seemed to bore down into the very center of the earth. Gusts of sulphurous gas puffed out of the crater. When he peered over the edge of the volcano, Parker saw the ugly glimmer of dull red flames hundreds of feet below.

"That light," panted Guerra, "it must have been this volcano that everybody has been seeing as the green light making this whole island glow in the night."

Parker carefully picked his way around the rim of the crater, his flashlight aimed at the ground. Occasionally he stooped to touch the soil with his hand.

WHEN he returned to the captain, he shook his head.

"It might have been a volcanic explosion," he said, "but the crater rim shows no signs of the fresh lava that would have been thrown up by an eruption."

"Did you find any marks at all on the rim?" asked Guerra.

Parker nodded, opening his hand to show the Mexican what lay in his palm, clearly visible in the ray of the flashlight he trained on it.

"I found this," he said. "Curious thing to find on a volcano crater."

It was a small radio tube, blackened by use. Guerra gasped an exclamation as he stared at it.

"What do you suppose that is doing here?" he demanded.

Parker placed the radio tube in his pocket and shrugged.

"I don't know," he said, "but I have a hunch it has something to do with that green flame." His flashlight beam moved over the ground for several more minutes and then snapped off. "No footprints, no signs of anything unusual except the radio tube. I suppose we might as well start back to the yacht."

The descent was much easier than the climb to the lip of the volcano. It was not many minutes before they reached the line of palms which marked the uppermost reaches of the jungle. They were in sight of the shore when Rex Parker heard a soft rustle behind him. He turned, his hand reaching for the gun he wore in the shoulder holster.

"Careful," he said softly. "I think we have company."

"Perhaps a monkey," whispered Guerra. "Or perhaps—" His whisper rose to a shout of alarm. "Look out!"

The warning came too late. From all sides of the two men came a wave of lithe brown bodies. Parker and the captain went down under an avalanche of human flesh. Parker fought off a pair of hands that had closed on his throat. He could hear Guerra panting and cursing behind him.

"Don't shoot, Jiminez!" he shouted, knowing that to do so would put the Indians in a killing mood. "For the love of heaven, don't shoot!"

He heard the crack of a club and a low moan from Guerra. Parker smashed a fist into a brown face, tried to get to his feet again and then went down as something landed with crushing force on his shoulder. He twisted over on his back and doubled up his feet. A kick on the shin and the man who was leaping for him grunted, stopped short, and fell unconscious.

Parker staggered to his feet. The heavy *thump* of a club caught him in the small of the back. He dropped suddenly to his knees, tackling another Indian who stood in front of him. The pain in his back was agonizing, but Parker fought on grimly. Instead of using his fists, he was exerting all his knowledge of wrestling and ju-jutsu in his struggle to get clear of the men who swarmed all around him.

He wrenched free of his assailants and ran to the still mound of flesh on the ground that was Captain Guerra. He stooped, heard too late the whistle of a club swishing through the air. Parker felt sudden pain stab through his skull and the night exploded into a rainbow of glaring colors.

STARK agony beat at the center of Rex Parker's brain as he opened his eyes. The sun blazed down from overhead, boring its way into his eyeballs. He tried to move his hands, then stopped as abrupt pain at his wrists told him he had been manacled with some kind of thorny vine. He tentatively moved a foot and found that his ankles had been bound as tightly as his wrists.

He looked about him. The first thing he saw was Jiminez Guerra, stretched on the ground beside him, as securely tied as himself. The Mexican's eyes were wide open. He managed a feeble smile as he saw Parker looking at him.

"You feel pretty sick, eh?" he asked sympathetically. "I did myself when I awoke."

"Where are we?" Parker groaned.

"In a clearing some distance away from the Indian village. I became conscious only a short time after I—what you say—took the count. The Indians were tying us up. They carried us through the village just before dawn and brought us to this place. I am not so sure I like it here."

The little Mexican gestured with his head toward three heavy, flat-topped stones which stood some distance away.

"Those especially I do not like," he said. "They are most unpleasantly like the sacrificial altars I have seen in the museums in Mexico City."

Parker tugged at the bonds at his wrists. Guerra grinned wryly and shook his head.

"I have been doing that since dawn. These Indians may be simple folk, but they know how to tie people. These vines would not break in a hundred years."

Parker shrugged ruefully and stopped struggling.

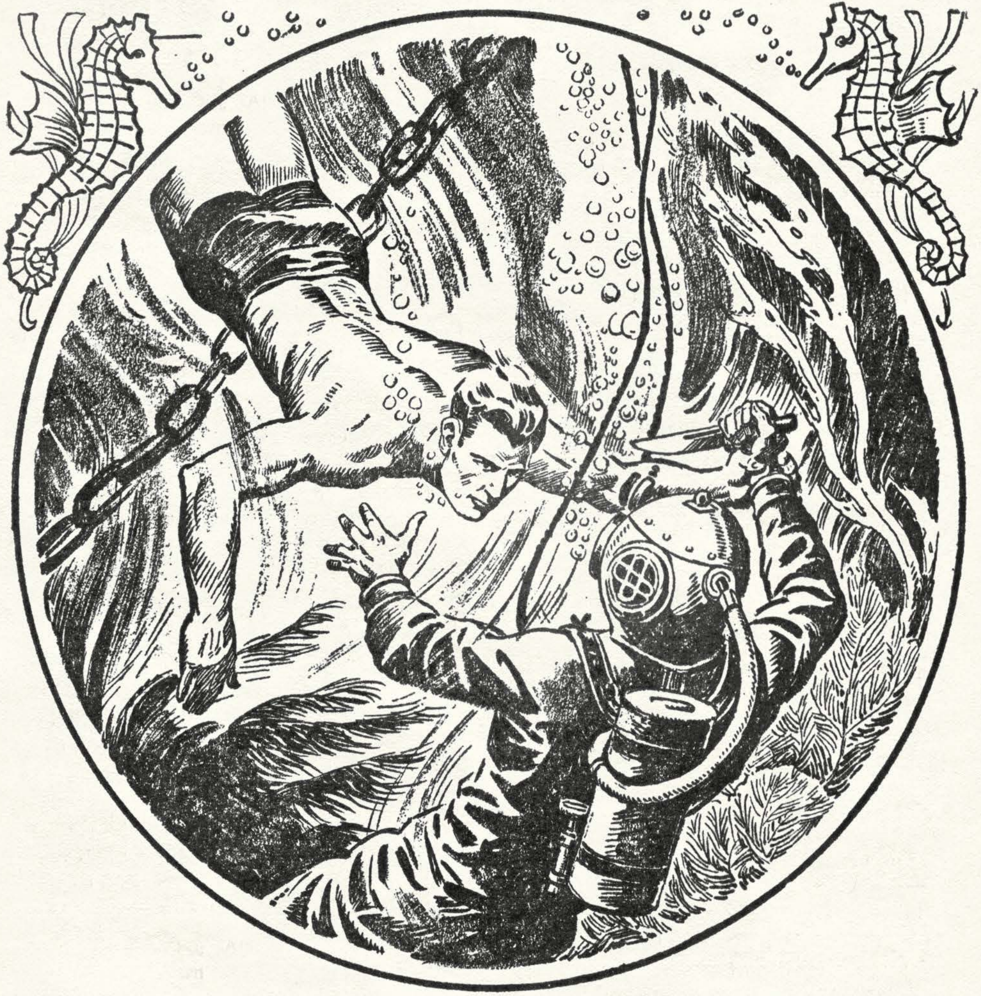
"It looks like we're in the soup," he said. "Miss Bligh will be worried."

"I know." Guerra nodded glumly. "I had hoped that she would have my crew hunt for us, or that our friends from the ketch might be out searching. The men from the *Milrey* did look, but the Indians were smarter than you think."

"What do you mean?"

"This morning I heard that tall *hombre*, Ellis, talking in the village with the chief. *Senor* Ellis was asking about us. And what did the chief say? We had gone to another part of the island in our little boat! The men from the ketch went back into the jungle. We were both gagged to keep us from shouting the truth. The Indians have since removed the gags." He sighed. "My information was wrong. I am indeed disappointed by these Indian liars. And I had looked forward to meeting honest men!"

Parker was silent. He was worried about Winnie. Was she still safe on the yacht, or had she taken some of the crew from the *San Marco* and gone looking for him on the island? If so, there was a good chance that she was in danger.



Parker clutched the knife-arm of the diver in a grip of steel (Chapter XIII)

"We have quite some time to ponder our predicament," the little Mexican continued. "The Indians said among themselves that we would not be given to Ameena until nightfall."

"Nightfall?" gasped Parker. "What time is it now?"

"About two in the afternoon," answered the captain. "There is nothing we can do but wait, *amigo*."

HOURS passed. Guerra dozed, awoke, hummed a Mexican love song, spoke a few words to Parker and dozed again. Finally Parker tensed as he heard the soft gabble of voices coming toward him.

His spirits sank again when two brown-skinned Indians padded into the clearing, moving noiselessly across the grass. While Parker lay utterly helpless, the Indians forced a heavily wadded strip of bark between his jaws. Guerra woke with a start and cursed as he was gagged.

After a few moments the two captives heard the sound of the men from the *Milrey* passing through the village on their way back from the jungle. Parker strained his ears. A voice was apparently talking to one of the natives. The Indian answered briefly. Parker heard Ellis speaking to his companions.

"They say the little Mexican and his friend haven't got back yet. They must be somewhere in the jungle. Hope they get back soon. The girl is badly worried."

Relief swept over Rex Parker. At least Winnie was safe, probably still on the yacht, or Ellis would not have mentioned her so casually. It had not been fear for his own safety that had haunted him, for the Masked Detective had faced danger many times before. It was merely that his being a captive like this prevented his coming to Winnie Bligh's aid if she needed him.

The voices of the white men passed on out of earshot. Soon Parker could hear the *put-put* of an outboard motor attached to the ketch's dinghy. The two Indians who had remained beside the two bound men removed the gags and vanished as silently as they had appeared.

A file of natives walked into the clearing. Two men seized Parker by the shoulders and feet and carried him to one of the flat-topped stones. Another pair hauled Guerra to the second sacrificial rock. One of the Indians, slightly more broad-shouldered than his companions, stepped up, balancing a heavy, knobby club in his hand.

"I do not think I feel happy about this," moaned Guerra. "This man with the club looks too pleased."

Parker became keenly conscious of the grim menace that hung over them as he stared up from the sacrificial stone. His gaze was fixed on a tall pole, topped by a bleached and grinning skull. The eyeless sockets of the grisly object seemed to be staring down mockingly at him. For an instant he gazed at it bleakly. Then hope surged within him. Helpless, bound hand and foot and with the Indian holding the club advancing with sinister intent, he felt there was still a chance.

"Quick!" he whispered to Guerra in English. "Give me the Indian words for 'Stop, I command it!' "

Guerra did not hesitate, or ask the reason for Parker's strange request. He whispered a few words in the Carib dialect. The executioner moved up to the stone and stood glaring down at Parker with black, shining eyes that reflected pure hatred.

"You've got to give me the right words, Jiminez, while I try my stunt," said Parker in English. "If we make a slip, it means our death."

The executioner raised his heavy club to his shoulder, ready to bring it down in a death-dealing blow. The Indians strained forward, watching tensely, their faces blank. Only their eyes appeared alive. Parker watched the muscles of the Indian's forearms and shoulders tense. The club began its swing.

It was then that the skull spoke!

High and clear, cutting through the still air of twilight, came a command from the gaping mouth of the bleached skull.

"Stop!" the skull appeared to say. "I, Ameena, command it!"

THE executioner's eyes widened in amazement. He whirled and stared up at the skull atop the pole.

"Quick," urged Parker to the captain. 'Give me some more words."

Goggling with astonishment, Guerra hastily whispered several more words in Carib.

"Why harm these men?" the skull seemed to ask. "What have they done to you?"

The executioner dropped his club and sank to his knees. Slowly the other savages crouched in obeisance before the skull. In their amazement and terror, they paid no attention to the whispers that passed between the two captives.

"Answer!" the skull commanded. "Answer, before you bring the wrath of Ameena down on you!"

The executioner raised his hands in supplication and spoke a long faltering sentence, while the captain of the Mexican Coast Guard listened intently.

"He says we violated Ameena's taboo," translated Guerra swiftly. "Tell him this."

Again he whispered in the Indian language.

"It is true," said the skull, "that they have violated the taboo by going to the mountain, but they meant no harm. They are your friends. I say that they shall walk among you and no hand shall be lifted against them, no matter what taboos they violate. It is my command. The voice of Ameena has spoken!"

The natives touched the ground with their foreheads. There was no doubt that they were convinced. Had they not heard the voice of Ameena before, roaring from the mountain top? To their simple minds, it was easy to believe that their god had spoken again from the grinning skull.

"Ameena!" they wailed in chorus. "Ameena, we hear and obey!"

Eager hands reached for the thongs which tied Parker and Guerra. Both men were soon free. They lowered themselves from the sacrificial blocks. Guerra looked up toward the grinning skull. Parker realized then that the little Mexican was a marvelous actor.

"We thank you, O Ameena," Guerra said in Carib. "Thank you for telling your sons about our friendly thoughts."

The Indians gave way, making an aisle as Parker and the captain left the clearing. Gone was the sinister glitter in their dark eyes. Now their attitude was passive but friendly.

"Rex," said Guerra, "I thought I knew all your talents, but this is the first time I knew you were—what you say—"

He groped for the English word.

"Ventriloquist," supplied Parker. "First time I've tried it recently, Jiminez, though I used to do it constantly when I was a kid. I'd never have been able to get away with it, if I hadn't had such an excellent stooge."

"Stooge?" repeated Guerra, bewildered. "What is this stooge?"

Rex Parker gave the Mexican an affectionate pat on the shoulder.

"Slang word," he said briefly, "meaning a hero."

CHAPTER VII

Death Has Four Fingers

NIGHT cast its sable mantle over Moaxacelo, lengthening the black shadows of the jungle and making the white sand of the beach shimmer eerily in the pale light of the far-off stars. At the northern end of the shore that formed the harbor of the island, a tall, dark-haired man and a slender girl walked slowly over the sands.

"It's like a jigsaw puzzle with some of the pieces thrown away, Cap'n," complained Rex Parker as he strode along beside Winnie Bligh. "I can't get it fitted together. There must be some tie-up between the murder of Harvey Martin on the cruise ship and the way that Bill Ritchie was killed so horribly here on the island. But what?"

"I wish I knew," said Winnie, "but I'm just as puzzled as you are. I don't trust any of those men on the *Milrey* and I've met them all now. Every one of them seemed to be hiding something from the others and from the world in general."

"I still think they're after treasure, but that isn't important. What we've got to learn is whether this island is actually the base for that pirate submarine. Of course I want to learn who killed those two men, but just those two murders aren't enough of a case to call out the Masked Detective. Hiding his equipment here on the beach isn't a bad idea, though, in case he has to go into action."

"Of all the conceited men!" exclaimed Winnie. She laughed. "But you're right on both counts, Rex. We can't waste the Masked Detective on every little case, and the submarine angle is the important one. They may raid and loot other passenger ships in these waters. The next time maybe the Mask won't be on board to stop them with a fire hose."

"That's just it."

They had rounded the north end of the island as they talked. Here the beach was clustered with huge boulders, as though a giant had tired of playing marbles along the shore and had left his toys behind him. The huge rocks assumed strange and sinister shapes in the starlight.

"What a weird place!" murmured Winnie. "No wonder they call this the 'Island of Death'. Can't you just imagine the old pirates wandering over these shores?"

"I wish I could," Parker sighed. "I'd probably like them better than those Indians who cracked me over the head last night and took Guerra and me prisoners. That was close! I never thought I'd get away with that hammy ventriloquist stuff, but it worked."

"I know," Winnie said somberly. "I was terribly worried, but I thought I'd better remain on the yacht in case you came back." She stopped and peered at him. "Listen, Rex, after I faked that cable the way I did in Poljos, don't you think it's about time the Masked Detective showed up on this island? It's more than only a couple of murders."

"I know," said Parker. "He's going to show up and visit those men on the ketch tonight. With the mask and a complete change of clothing, Ellis and the rest will never know that Rex Parker and the Mask are the same man."

"Look!" exclaimed Winnie as they stood hidden in the shadow of a big rock. "See that light over there?"

Parker glanced in the direction she indicated. What appeared to be a lantern was bobbing about in the deep shadows near the jungle, as though someone were carrying it carelessly in his hand. As Parker and the girl watched tensely, a figure loomed into view on the beach.

IT was a man dressed in the costume of a pirate of the Spanish Main. He carried a gleaming cutlass in one hand and a lantern in the other. Behind him came ten other buccaneers, some of them with bright cloths tied about their heads. They were an evil-looking crew.

"Pirates!" gasped Winnie. "Are—are they ghosts, Rex?"

"I doubt it," replied Parker grimly. "Probably part of that submarine crew, dressed like that so the Indians will think they're ghosts and won't interfere with them as they operate around the island."

At a shout from the depths of the jungle, the pirates turned back and disappeared into the brush. Parker and Winnie silently watched them vanish.

"I'm going to trail those men," he said, "but I don't want to risk having the Indians trail me. I had enough of that last night and today. We're going back to the yacht and I'll disguise myself as one of them."

"So the Mask becomes an Indian," said Winnie as they rowed to the yacht. "Well, you'd better be a wooden one. You can't speak their language."

"I'll be dumb," said Parker, "but only in one way."

Half an hour later he slipped out of his cabin on the yacht. He was disguised as a Carib Indian, his breechclouted body darkened with mahogany stain, his features altered by deftly applied makeup, and his head covered by a wig of lank black hair.

Winnie kept Captain Guerra busily engaged in conversation while the disguised Mask reached the deck and lowered himself silently into the water. He took a deep breath and sank. Pushing himself away from the yacht with his feet, he struck out for shore, swimming underwater with powerful strokes that sent him toward the beach with the speed and ease of a barracuda.

He emerged dripping from the surf and walked up the crescent-shaped beach on which the Indian village stood. So clever was his disguise, still intact despite the swim in from the *San Marco,* that the few Indians he passed gave him only a fleeting glance, immediately accepting him as one of the tribe.

The Mask walked along the trail leading back to the village until he was certain that none of the Indians were watching him. Then he turned sharply and plunged off into the jungle to make a wide circle that brought him back to the shore, some distance from the beach he had just traversed.

He had seen signs of activity on board the *Milrey* and he wanted to know what was going on there. He was interested in trailing the mysterious pirates, but if one of the men from the ketch could lead him to them, that would be still better.

At last he heard a splash which broke the rhythmic beat of the breakers. More time elapsed before the Mask saw a man wade up out of the combers. For a moment the stranger stood there, his head turning as he looked up and down the beach. Then Parker saw him whirl when there was a rustle in the underbrush and an Indian emerged.

The man who had come out of the surf grunted a few words in Indian dialect to the native. The Indian responded with a few guttural grunts and continued walking. When he had passed out of sight, the stranger turned and ran for the jungle to the north of the sleeping village.

"Good!" muttered the Mask with grim satisfaction. "Heading in the direction I hoped he'd go."

He followed as noiselessly as the cleverest Indian tracker, keeping just out of sight of the man, who was heading inland. After a long trek toward the center of the island, the stranger turned and crossed a patch of swampy ground, through which a small stream meandered turgidly.

CLOSE behind, the Mask went down on his hands and knees to study the tracks made in the soft mud by his human quarry. The brilliant tropical moon suddenly burst through the clouds and its light helped him pick out the footprints.

"Big man, according to the size of his feet," said the Mask, "though that isn't always the case. This time it confirms the impression I got at a distance. Could be Ellis, or Desmond, or Baker. Seemed a bit too tall for Baker, though."

His keen gaze saw a partly smoked cigarette that the man ahead had tossed aside. It had been crudely made, was already falling apart, though it was still fresh. Apparently the smoker had been nervous, for only a few puffs had been taken before it was thrown away.

The trail led up hill and down dale for several miles before the man the Mask was trailing began to strike back toward the coast. Parker tried desperately to catch a glimpse of his quarry's face, but the shadows gave him no opportunity. He knew only that the man was tall and broad-shouldered and was wearing a brief pair of swimming trunks.

"It could be Ellis," Parker told himself. "And it's a good bet that that's who it is."

At length the trail led to a wide pool almost hidden in the thick foliage of the jungle. A broad, sluggish stream flowed out of one end of the pool to wind its way toward the Gulf through the darkness of a tangled mangrove swamp. For several seconds the man from the *Milrey* stood motionless on the brink of the pool. Then he sat down on the bank and stared at the water. He seemed to be waiting for somebody or something.

Twenty feet behind him, the Masked Detective lay flat on his stomach, his eyes fixed on the man beside the pool. Then his head turned swiftly as he heard the faint rustle of a body moving stealthily through the undergrowth far to his right.

"I'm not the only one who's interested in our friend," he mused. "Somebody else has been following him—or maybe me."

He inched forward, trying to move into a position where he could see the face of the man on the brink of the pool. The sounds of someone moving through the jungle to the Masked Detective's right grew louder. Parker raised his head as the man by the pool turned slightly toward him.

There was the slightest suggestion of a step behind the Masked Detective and he instinctively glanced back over his shoulder. With a swish of air, something came hurtling down on him. He felt the stabbing pain of a crushing blow on the side of the head, then blackness as intense as the deepest pit of Ameena's abode.

THE Mask struggled back to consciousness with the effort of a man climbing a steep ladder. Devils of pain raced through his head, hammering at his skull with their mallets. He lay flat again trying to remember the events that had led up to this predicament.

"Let's see," he told himself without opening his eyes. "I'm disguised as an Indian. Whoever clipped me must think he's got a native. Seeing I don't know the language, I'd better play dumb."

Footsteps crunched toward him. Parker moved slightly and felt the jab of sharp stones beneath his shoulders. He was sure that he must be lying on rocky ground.

"Hey, Boss!" called a rough voice. "This here Indian looks like he's coming out of it!"

The Mask gave a faint moan and opened his eyes. Standing over him was a tall, slender man in a faultlessly cut white suit. Behind him were hard-looking thugs dressed in pirate costumes. The man in the white suit had a broad, flat face, a clipped black mustache and a broken nose. Parker was sure he had never seen this man before, but his eyes narrowed as he discovered that one of the pirates was Butch Dugan.

Dugan's presence here with these men meant they were part of the submarine crew. The Mask felt that he was getting somewhere in this case at last.

All of the men were staring down at their captive. Rex Parker found himself growing annoyed. Being knocked out and captured by two different factions within less than forty-eight hours made him feel a bit foolish. Worse still, his head felt like an eggshell that would crush if anything touched it.

"Yeah, this lug is coming to, all right," said the man in the white suit. "Somebody feed him a drink. I want to talk to him."

"Okay, 'Fingers,'" said Dugan.

The mouth of a bottle of whisky was jammed between the Mask's teeth and his mouth was forcibly filled with a fiery liquid. He choked, coughed and tried to sit up, but found his hands and feet had been securely tied with heavy rope.

Parker looked around, saw he was in some kind of cave. The place was lighted by acetylene lamps, which cast a garish light over the whitewashed walls and ceiling of the underground room. Tables, chairs and numerous crates and boxes littered the floor.

Fingers rattled out a sentence in what the Mask recognized as the language of the island tribe. Parker stared back at the other man without speaking, his copper-hued face inscrutable.

The man in the white suit turned away in disgust, scowling.

“This Indian won’t talk,” he said in English. “Maybe we better find a way to make him open his trap.”

“That’s what I like about you,” said Dugan. “Fingers Tashman is always thinkin’ up some fun for the boys. I betcha I could make the mug talk in a hurry. All it would take is the end of a lighted cigar in one eye and he’d yammer his head off.”

“None of that, Butch,” said the man called Fingers Tashman, who was obviously the leader of the gang. “I don’t want to give him the works unless he knows something. Aren’t we going to enough trouble to keep these natives from getting riled as it is now?”

“Yeah,” said another of the band. “I feel like a monkey, dressed up in this pirate outfit.”

“And you look like one,” said Dugan, glaring at the wizen-faced man.

“Shut up!” snapped Tashman. “I’m gonna work on this guy again.”

He pushed his panama hat back on his head and turned back to the prisoner. He sat down beside Parker and began to talk slowly and quietly in the language of the Indians. He seemed to be making an earnest statement, moving his big hands expressively as he talked. The Mask saw that Tashman’s left thumb was missing, leaving only the four fingers.

“Four fingers!” Parker thought excitedly. “Is this what Harvey Martin was talking about?”

The Mask found himself in a difficult position. As one of the Indians, he should understand every word that Fingers Tashman was saying, but it was actually so much gibberish as far as he was concerned.

Tashman finished speaking and waited a moment for the Indian to answer. When the captive remained silent, the leader of the pirates gave a snort of disgust.

“It’s no use,” said Tashman. “He won’t talk. There’s only one thing to do with him and that’s what I’ve been threatening him with. We’ll have to give him to Ameena by tossing him into the volcano crater.”

[*Turn page*]

QUICK!
SLICK!
CLICK!
20 PROBAK JUNIOR BLADES
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.
MADE IN U.S.A.
20 FOR 25c
4 FOR 10c
RECEPTACLE FOR USED BLADES INSIDE

Slick Shaves For Tough-Bearded Men . . . PROBAK Jr. Blades Twenty For Only A Quarter!

CHAPTER VIII

Revolt of a Sacrifice

HEARING the grim words of the hard-faced leader of the gang, the Mask felt a chill of apprehension race along his spine. There was no doubt in his mind that all of these men were ruthless killers. He knew that by the murderous way they had acted when they had boarded the cruise ship three nights ago. That they would remorselessly drop an Indian to his death in the crater of the volcano was not surprising.

"Okay," said Fingers Tashman wearily as he stared at the prisoner. "I tried to reason with this Indian, but he won't talk. He knows what I'm saying, too. Look how the sweat's standing out on his forehead. He doesn't like the idea of being tossed into the volcano, and still he won't talk."

"Aw, there ain't no reason for you to bother about it, Fingers," said Butch Dugan brutally. "What's one Indian, anyway?"

"All right," agreed Tashman. He glanced at two of the other men. "'Mopy,' you and 'Stud' take him along and give him the works. And do a clean job of it, see? Make sure there's no trace of him. I don't want the rest of the Indians to find any part of him. If he just disappears, they'll think Ameena got him."

Two men stepped forward. One was a short, thick-set thug. The other was more slender and had a pair of wicked, squinting eyes. They lifted the Masked Detective to his feet.

"Better blindfold him," advised Fingers Tashman.

"Why bother, Chief?" asked Mopy. "This guy ain't going to live long enough to tell anybody where he is, or to remember just where he's been."

Tashman scowled and his eyes grew hard as he glared at the short, thick-set man.

"You heard me!" he barked. "Fingers Tashman never takes chances, even with this poor mug of an Indian. That's why I've been able to stay in the rackets as long as I have. Blindfold that guy and don't argue!"

"Yeah, sure, Boss," said Mopy hastily.

A dirty rag was whipped around the Masked Detective's eyes and drawn tight at the back of his head. The ropes that tied his ankles were untied, but the cords at his wrists, binding them in front of him, were left on. There was the prod of a gun muzzle in his back. An ungentle hand gave him a shove forward. Somebody's hand grasped his elbow and Parker started stumbling along, guided by the man holding his arm.

The voices of the other men grew fainter as the Mask walked over rough rock for some distance in what seemed to be a turning and twisting corridor. He felt dampness in the air.

"Must be an underground passageway," Parker mentally decided. "The gang must have their hideout somewhere underground. That's why they never were found when the island was searched."

The floor of the tunnel began to slant upward at a fairly steep angle. Then the man at his elbow pulled the Masked Detective to a halt.

"Okay," growled a voice beside him. "Open it up, Mopy."

"Why don't we use the other door?" asked Mopy. "We could toss him right out without having to make that long climb."

"Naw," said Stud. "We ain't got any masks and that gas would knock us off our feet for a month."

The Mask heard the grating of hinges as Mopy grunted, straining at something. There was a creak and Stud pushed Parker forward. The

Mask felt a rush of warm night air on his face and knew they were outside the tunnel. There was another creak and the grating of hinges and something *thumped* dully.

FOOTSTEPS sounded on crunching lava and Stud's big hand took Parker's arm again. They walked on, climbing steadily upward over the rough chunks of lava that the volcano of Moaxacelo had spewed forth perhaps centuries before.

It was a hard climb. The blindfolded prisoner fell several times, gashing his bare knees on the rough rock, before the three men finally halted, panting for breath. The rank smell of sulphur was strong in the Mask's nostrils and he heard a faint, far-off rumbling. The restless noise of seething lava, hugged to the center of the earth, waiting for what might come hurtling down to its annihilating embrace.

"Let's get it over quick, so we can get back before dawn," Mopy said. "How about plugging him and then shoving him over?"

There was a silence which lasted for what seemed an eternity. Then Rex Parker felt the muzzle of a gun jammed deeper into his ribs. One squeeze of that trigger and everything would be over. The Mask's career would be ended.

Stud's voice finally broke the ominous hush.

"Naw, that ain't no fun. Besides, they'd hear the shot down in the Indian village and out on them boats. We'll just heave him over and listen to him squeal."

Parker's blood curdled at the brutal tone of the coldly murderous voice.

"All right," agreed Mopy, "but let's do it fast."

"Me, I like to hear 'em squeal. We got plenty of time."

"Okay," said Mopy indifferently. "I'll put my foot out and you shove him over it. That'll send him down head-first."

The pressure of the gun muzzle was relaxed as Stud's hand moved to the small of Parker's back.

"All right," said the killer. "Let's go!"

But at that point the Mask went into action!

Twisting his body to one side, away from the gun, he reached above his head with his tied hands. At the same instant he kicked out venomously in the general direction of the place where he had last heard Mopy's voice. He felt the foot land and heard a satisfying gasp of pain.

The gun roared. There was a streak of pain along Parker's side as the slug seared his ribs. The Mask felt his forearms slide down, one on each side of Stud's head, behind him. Parker tightened his arms, bent his shoulders and gave a twisting heave.

Struggling wildly, Stud left his feet and whirled over the Mask's shoulder. His gun clattered on the lava. At the top of the swing, Parker relaxed his grip and felt Stud's head slip out from beneath his forearms.

"No!" screamed the man who liked to hear them squeal. "No! Oh, God, I'm going over! No—"

The wild yells broke off into horrible, inhuman gibberish which grew fainter, fainter, then ceased as Stud went over the lip of the volcano and plunged down to the death in molten rock and searing flame which he had planned for a helpless Indian.

The Mask yanked the blindfold down around his neck and looked for the other thug. Mopy's gun boomed as Parker dived at him, but it was obvious that Stud's terrified shrieks had definitely unnerved the second killer. The bullet was wide by several feet.

At the same instant the Mask landed on Mopy, landed a lucky blow that knocked the gun out of the thug's grasp.

The rope around Parker's wrists proved a heavy handicap as the two men fought grimly. Mopy was an expert in rough-and-tumble fighting and his terror made him doubly strong. He gouged, bit, clawed and punched as the Mask grappled with him. Parker was forced to punch with both hands together as he pounded at Mopy's head.

"You ain't gonna get me like you got Stud!" panted the killer.

Parker gasped as Mopy's knee drove into the pit of his stomach. Weakened by the two blows on the head he had received in the past forty-eight hours, the Mask came perilously close to losing consciousness. But a breath of sulphur fume, gusting up from the volcano crater, reminded him of the fate he could expect if he lost this fight.

Parker shook off the pain of Mopy's kick and dived back into battle. His tied hands shot out and caught Mopy squarely on the chin. The thug reeled back. Immediately the Masked Detective pounced for the gun that lay several yards away. As he straightened up, he brought the muzzle around on Mopy.

"All right!" he ordered. "Get your hands up!"

Mopy's eyes widened as he looked at Parker in amazement. This Indian, whom he had watched remain silent while threatened with death in the volcano, was talking to him in English.

"Wha-what do you want?" he blurted, his face blank.

"Your promise that you'll behave if I don't kill you now," grated the Mask. "Your surrender, or I'll heave you after your pal."

Mopy nodded dumbly, still dazed.

"Come here and untie my hands," said the Mask.

Mopy advanced slowly, his eyes fixed on the copper-hued face of the man he had been instructed to kill.

"Who are you, anyway?" he demanded hoarsely. "I thought you was an Indian."

"I'm the man they call the Masked Detective."

"The Masked Detective?" exclaimed Mopy. "And the boss turns you over to a couple of lugs like me and Stud to take care of on a bump-off!"

"Never mind that," said the Mask impatiently. "Get this rope off my wrists."

Mopy bent his head to peer at the bonds around Parker's wrists. The Mask eyed him warily.

"I can't see," Mopy said huskily. "It's too dark."

"Quit stalling!" snapped Parker. "Get those ropes off!"

Mopy's head came up like a flash. The top of the hard skull caught the Mask under the jaw with a blinding jar. Stars exploded in front of his eyes as he staggered backward, his head swimming.

His vision cleared suddenly as he saw Mopy running at him, hands outstretched to give him the final shove. He cast one sideward glance and he saw he was standing on the very lip of the volcano!

EVEN as his finger tightened on the trigger of the gun, the lava beneath the Mask's feet crumbled. He threw himself face forward, clawing for a handhold as the loose lava dropped away from beneath him. He dropped the gun. His hands caught a jagged point of lava and held desperately.

For a breathless second he seemed to be hanging over the side of the pit. Then he inched forward until his torso was on solid ground. He had faced and escaped death all in less than two seconds.

He heard a wild scream and looked up. Mopy, running at full speed at the Mask, was unable to check himself in time. He swerved away from Parker in a frantic effort to turn aside, to keep his feet—and failed.

Parker winced as he heard the shrill wail that was wrenched from Mopy's throat when the killer toppled over the edge of the crater. There was only that one scream, then a long, breathless silence.

The Mask crawled away from the edge of the crater and lay panting on the rough lava. He knew that he could release his bound wrists by rubbing the ropes against the rough lava all around him. He was free, but he had to recover before actually liberating himself.

Ameena had been given two offerings that night, yet neither of them was the victim that had been planned for the weird god of the island.

CHAPTER IX

Visit to the Enemy

QUIETLY the Mask drew himself up over the side of the yacht, *San Marco,* about an hour later. He padded without a sound across the deck and descended to the cabins. There was no sign of Winnie. Parker decided that she was probably asleep. He went to Captain Guerra's cabin and entered.

"You will put up the hands!" cried the little Mexican from his bunk.

Parker snapped on the cabin light. He smiled as he saw the bright, fearless eyes of the captain glaring at him from the bunk and noticed the big gun that Guerra held in his hand.

"It's all right, Jiminez," said Parker softly. "Don't let this disguise fool you. It's me, Rex Parker."

"By the Saints!" exclaimed Guerra. "Now you are an Indian. The life of a captain of the coast guard is indeed filled with surprises." He frowned as he looked closer at the muscular, copper-hued body protected only by the breech-clout. "You look like you have been wrestling with wildcats. Where did you get so many cuts and scratches?"

"That's a long story," Parker said. "I'll tell you later. But first did you and Miss Bligh hear anything from the ketch after I left?"

The chubby Mexican swung his feet over the edge of the bunk and yawned, at the same time blindly thrusting his gun back under the pillow behind him.

"We hear many things," he said disgustedly. "The *senorita* and I talk, but I am worried, my nerves are on edge. First I learn that you have gone to explore the island alone. Me, I do not like this. I think that you should have Guerra with you as stooge, but the *senorita* says no, it is better you go alone."

"Winnie was right," declared Parker. "You see, I went to meet the Masked Detective."

"The Masked Detective?" blurted Guerra eagerly. "He is here on this island?"

"Yes, but he told me he wants to keep undercover, says he can work better that way. But go on, Jiminez. What happened here?"

"Time passes with the slowness of a stubborn mule. The *senorita* and I, we wait. We hear shots far-off and rush up on deck. And then we see something. At least we think we see something."

"What?" demanded Parker.

"It is what looks like a green light, very faint, shining somewhere in the jungle. It glows only for a second and then it is gone."

Parker frowned, remembering that the man who had come from the *Milrey* had been waiting for someone at the pool back in the jungle to the north. Had that man been in league with Fingers Tashman and his gang? If not, that flash of green light might have a sinister meaning.

"I don't like that," Parker said. "Sounds like the light Ellis thought he saw when Ritchie was killed."

"I thought of that," admitted Guerra. "I was tempted to go ashore and investigate, but I did not want to leave the *senorita* unprotected."

Parker turned and moved swiftly toward the door.

"Get dressed while I climb out of this disguise," he said. "We're going to pay a visit to the *Milrey* to borrow a cup of sugar."

He disappeared into the corridor. Guerra stared after him with baffled eyes.

"Cup of sugar?" he repeated, then shrugged. "Much better a glass of wine. We left Poljos without a single drop. How can Jiminez Profilia Guerra y Sanchez solve these mysteries without a glass of wine?"

A FEW minutes later Parker emerged from his cabin, minus his Indian disguise. He was dressed in dark trousers, rubber-soled shoes and a white shirt. His automatic was in the shoulder holster beneath the gray sport coat he wore.

"Rex!" cried Winnie as she opened the door of her cabin and saw him. "Oh, I'm so glad you're back safely! I was worried." She was still fully dressed and it was obvious that she had not been able to sleep. "What happened?"

"No time to tell you about it now, Cap'n." He smiled reassuringly at her. "Everything is all right. Guerra and I are going over to pay a call on the men in the ketch."

"At this time of night?" She glanced at her wrist-watch. "It's two A.M."

"I know, but I just want to make sure they are all on board the *Milrey*. I have a good reason. I'll tell you all about it later."

"All right," Winnie said as Parker hurried to join Guerra, who was going up on deck. "But hurry back."

"There's one thing I want to know about," said Parker when the two men reached the deck. "Do you know of anyone named Fingers Tashman?"

"Fingers Tashman?" exclaimed Guerra. "I know of him, certainly, though I've never been fortunate enough to meet him. He is a scoundrel, that one! Smuggler, gun-runner, killer—there is nothing he has not done. We have hunted him for years, cooperating with almost every government in this part of the Hemisphere. Why do you ask?"

"Because Fingers Tashman is somewhere on Moaxacelo," stated Parker. "And I'm willing to bet that he's the leader of those submarine pirates."

"What?" cried Guerra. "Here on the island? Fine! We shall capture him and I will get a citation. This is splendid!"

"It's not that easy. Tashman has a bunch of dangerous men with him. Besides, we've got to find where he is first. I don't know that."

"But—" Guerra started to protest.

Parker interrupted him.

"I'll explain later. Right now I'm anxious to get over to the ketch."

A few minutes later Parker and Guerra were aboard the *Milrey,* arousing the men on the boat. Cole was first to respond to their hail. Woodley, Desmond and Baker followed the elderly man above deck to meet the nocturnal visitors.

"Where's Ray Ellis?" Parker asked as he looked around the circle of men.

"I'll get him," said Desmond. "He sleeps like a log. Takes an explosion to get him awake."

The young, blond-haired man ducked down through the companionway and the men on deck heard him calling loudly. Then there was a brief silence, followed by a muttered ejaculation. Desmond returned to the deck.

"That's strange," he said. "Ellis doesn't seem to be in his bunk, or anywhere else down there."

"Nonsense!" Cole snorted. "He must be somewhere on board. Look again."

DESMOND disappeared and once more his shouts were heard below. Doors opened and closed and finally he returned.

"Sorry, sir," he said as he deftly

rolled a cigarette. "I've looked everywhere. He just isn't on the boat."

"Maybe he went for a swim," suggested Jim Baker. "Maybe he couldn't sleep or something. He could even have gone ashore."

"For what?" Cole snapped. "Why would Ellis or anyone else go ashore in the middle of the night?"

Parker's keen eyes caught a spark in the glance which the elderly man shot at Baker.

It was obvious that there was no love lost between George Bliss Cole and the stocky adventurer.

"Why—er—maybe he wanted to sleep on the beach," Baker said lamely. "Don't forget, we spent that first night there and then brought our camping equipment back to the boat. Maybe he liked sleeping on the beach."

"Sure there'd be no other reason, Baker?" Desmond's face was revealed in the light of a match as he held the flame to his cigarette. It made his handsome features seem weird. "There wouldn't be any extra special reason for Ellis to go ashore tonight, would there?"

Baker started an angry retort before he remembered the presence of Parker and Guerra. He bit his lip and remained silent.

The air seemed electric with suppressed tension.

"I was afraid of something like this," Parker said after a brief silence. "We came over here to warn you that we have reason to believe it would be dangerous for anybody from the *Milrey* to go ashore tonight. It seems we're too late."

"Why do you say that?" demanded Cole.

"Because I've been in contact with the Masked Detective. He's on the island. He told me that for any of us to go wandering around there alone at night might mean our death."

"I see," said Cole somberly. "And Ellis is missing."

"Right." Parker turned to Desmond. "Could you show me Ellis' bunk? I want to see something."

"Of course."

Desmond tossed away his cigarette and led Parker below. They paused in front of a bunk indicated by Howard Desmond. Parker stooped to pick up a pair of tennis shoes.

"These are his, I suppose," he said.

Desmond nodded. Parker's fingers reached inside one shoe and felt about for an instant. Then he dropped the two sneakers beside the bunk and turned toward the companionway. Desmond put out a hand and touched Parker's arm.

"Just a minute," he said, his voice low. "I want to talk to you."

"Go ahead." Parker turned to him. "What's on your mind, Desmond?"

"It's Ellis. After that warning you got from the Masked Detective, do you think something may have happened to Ellis?"

"Do you?" Parker gazed into Desmond's eyes, searching their depths as he made an effort to read the other man's mind.

"I—I don't know," Desmond confessed, a look of puzzled fear on his face. "Since Ritchie was killed, I've been expecting almost anything. I don't think anybody is safe. You don't know what it's been like here, Parker—not one of us daring to trust the rest, afraid to sleep for fear we'll be killed in the night."

"You mean you suspect each other?"

"I do, at least. I suspect them all. I wish I'd never come on this blasted trip!"

PARKER noticed the nervous twitching of a muscle in Desmond's jaw. This man obviously had some reason to be frightened, something more than the fact that Ritchie had been killed and he suspected the others.

Parker was sure of that.

He waited until Desmond regained control of himself and turned toward the companionway. Then he followed the young man up on deck. Parker felt the eyes of the four men on the *Milrey* boring into his back as he swung over the rail and dropped into the dinghy, where Guerra already waited.

WHEN they were back on board the *San Marco,* Winnie and the captain sat in the lounge of the yacht, listening eagerly as Parker related what had happened to him on the island. Telling them he couldn't reach the Masked Detective, he outlined the story of the man he had followed to the pool, his capture by Fingers Tashman's men, the underground hideout, the fight at the crate and the death of Mopy and Stud.

"But after those two men fell into the crater, what did you do?" demanded Guerra when Parker stopped talking.

"Spent a little time sawing the ropes off by rubbing them against the sharp edge of some lava," Parker said. "Then I tried to find the entrance to the tunnel that leads to the hideout of the pirates. I didn't get to first base. I gave up after a while and went back to the pool where I'd seen the man sitting on the back, watching and waiting for something. There wasn't a sign of anyone there."

Captain Guerra leaned forward, his dark eyes bright.

"But of course the man must have been Ellis," he stated. "He alone is missing from the ketch and you say this man swam up to the beach."

Parker lighted a cigarette and gazed into space as he exhaled a plume of smoke.

"Maybe it was Ellis," he said, "but I doubt it."

"You suspect someone, Rex?" asked Winnie eagerly.

"I do," said Parker, "but I'll tell you more about it when I'm certain." He yawned and rubbed his aching head. "Right now I'm going to turn in. I feel as though I could sleep for a week."

CHAPTER X

Death Comes in Threes

DAWN passed and the bright tropical sunlight bathed Moaxacelo in a golden glow. In their camp, the Indians moved languidly as they went about their daily tasks. The jungle that covered the greater part of the island remained dark and forbidding. Even the sinister, ancient volcano, which dominated everything as it towered high against the blue sky, seemed only another mountain.

Yet over all the island lingered a somber, brooding atmosphere that the sunlight could not banish. Death had splashed Moaxacelo's shores with blood that could not be washed away by the breakers of the Gulf of Mexico that rolled over its sandy beaches. The four men on the ketch felt it hover invisibly in the air, grim and insidious, and it made them watchful and wary of each other.

On board the yacht, Rex Parker was preoccupied as he ate breakfast with Winnie and Captain Guerra.

"Today I take my crew and we search the island for this Fingers Tashman and his gang," announced Guerra. "Not so, *amigo?*"

"No." Parker shook his head. "Remember, it was an Indian that Tashman and his gang captured last night. We're not supposed to know, or even suspect that bunch is on the island. They'll be puzzled over what has become of Mopy and Stud, but they can't actually be sure those two died in the crater."

"You mean that if we act as though we don't suspect there's anyone but the natives on the island, there's a better chance of eventually rounding up Tashman's gang?" asked Winnie. "Is that it, Rex?"

"That's it," Parker said.

He decided that the slender, dark-haired girl was looking especially attractive in the jersey and slacks she was wearing.

"We're about to have a visitor," warned Guerra, glancing across the water toward the ketch, which was riding at anchor some distance away. "One of the men from the *Milrey* is rowing over here."

"Who is it?" asked Parker, looking out at the water. "Oh, I see. It's Jim Baker." He frowned. "I wish I could remember where I'd seen that man before. His face certainly is familiar."

Baker reached the yacht and came on board. The thick-set man swaggered across the deck. His attitude was truculent as he faced the two men and the girl.

"Ellis didn't come back," he growled, "so I came over to see what you're going to do about it."

"Why should we do anything about it?" demanded Parker.

"You're supposed to be investigating Ritchie's death, aren't you? Isn't that why you're here at the island?"

"Certainly," said Parker shortly, for he did not like Baker's attitude. "But that's no reason why you should expect us to play nursemaid to the men on board the *Milrey*. If any of you go wandering about the island at night and run into trouble, that's your lookout."

"Indeed it is," supported Guerra. He got to his feet and stood looking at Baker like a bantam rooster about to fight. "I do not think I like you, *Senor* Baker."

"Which makes it mutual," said the heavy-set man. "I don't like Mexicans, either." He looked at Parker. "You told us that the Masked Detective is on the island. Seeing that you're the only one who's able to contact him, suppose you get busy, Parker."

"Busy doing what?"

"Finding the guy who bumped off Ritchie and getting this business cleaned up. I'm not going to stand much more stalling around."

"Just a minute, Baker." Parker's tone grew hard. "Don't get the idea that you can give us orders. The Masked Detective is working on this case in his own way. We're merely working with him. Understand that? Captain Guerra is here as official investigator for the Mexican Coast Guard."

"Sure. You also told us that none of us would be permitted to leave the island. Maybe something has happened to Ellis. Maybe the Indians got him. I wouldn't trust a single one of them. If I had my way, I'd turn a tommy-gun on the whole bunch. Then there wouldn't be any more killings around here."

JIM BAKER turned away and swaggered back toward the rail.

"Oh, Baker!" called Parker, thrusting his hand inside his coat and touching the butt of the automatic in his shoulder holster. "Those four fingers you mentioned are not really a drink."

Baker whirled with an oath, reaching for the gun he carried in his back pocket.

"As I was saying, Jiminez," remarked Parker, as though continuing a conversation with the little Mexican while holding the automatic in his hand, "this is one of the finest guns I ever owned."

Jim Baker glared at the automatic in Parker's hand and left his own in his pocket. He scowled and swung over the rail, then climbed down the rope ladder and got into his boat.

"Nasty character, isn't he?" said Parker casually as he dropped his automatic back into the holster. "I suspect 'Four Fingers' is another nickname for our pal, Tashman. I'm afraid that the gentlemen on board the ketch aren't playmates I would pick to be marooned with on a desert island."

"All the same, I do think we had better see if we can learn what happened to *Senor* Ellis," suggested Guerra.

Parker nodded. "We'll go ashore and take a look around now." He smiled as Winnie started to protest. "Never mind, Cap'n Bligh. We'll take you with us this time."

"Fooled you!" said Winnie with a laugh. "I don't want to go. You two can roam around in that jungle all you want. I'd much rather stay right here and wash my hair."

"Just as you wish."

An hour later Parker and Guerra were pushing their way through the shoulder-deep ferns and elephant-ear plants of the island jungle. Suddenly the captain gave a shout.

"To the left, *amigo!* Do you see that clearing?"

Parker turned and saw the cleared space which the little Mexican indicated. The two men made their way toward the spot. As they broke out of the jungle, Guerra snapped out a Spanish oath.

"A sacrificial stone! And—*Madre de Dios*—on top of it!"

Parker shuddered as he stared at the gruesome spectacle which topped the towering, ancient, crudely carved stone. One long arm hung over the side of the flat-topped rock, its limp hand dangling. The index finger of the hand seemed to be pointing at something on the ground.

Gaping up sightlessly at the cloudless sky was a face, rigid in death and transfixed with a look of despairing agony. The teeth of the wide mouth were caught over the lower lip. The eyes were open and staring. The other hand was clenched over the upper part of the chest. The body was unmarked above the chest, but there was no body below. Instead there was a charred mass of what had once been human flesh and bones. Some searing flame had reduced two-thirds of the man's body to a horrible cinder.

"So now," said Parker softly, "we know why Ellis didn't return to the *Milrey* last night."

"Yes," whispered Guerra. "He must have been dead when we visited the ketch."

PARKER nodded somberly. The mysterious death by fire had struck again, leaving a ghastly corpse in its wake. The Mask realized he would have to work fast to prevent there being any more victims.

"He probably was killed when you saw that green light," he said. "That must have been about the time we were battling those two killers on the mountain peak. You said you heard distant shots."

He left his Mexican companion and searched about the ground around the sacrificial stone. There were many footprints and signs that a body had been dragged into the clearing from the jungle. Following the track, Parker came to a second, smaller clearing about a quarter of a mile from where Ellis' body had been found.

Here the grass and ferns were seared and withered, as though some fire had swept the clearing recently. A small rectangle of paper fluttered in a faint breeze. Parker reached down and picked it up. His eyes narrowed as he examined it closely.

"So that's why he was worried," he muttered. "The fiend! I'm only sorry this isn't enough to prove it against him."

Returning to the first clearing, Parker found the little Mexican disconsolate.

"The *Senor* Baker was right," Guerra said mournfully. "We do not do enough. If I had left the yacht and investigated the green light when I saw it, I might—"

"No, Jiminez," Parker cut in swiftly. "You could have been no help to Ellis. He died in the green flame. I'm certain that his killer, or killers, would have been gone for quite a while by the time you could have reached this spot."

Guerra rattled out a string of oaths.

"Who is responsible for this?" he

finally asked, his eyes murderous. "The Indians? Fingers Tashman? The men from the ketch?"

"It could have been any of them," Parker replied slowly, "but just who is what we've got to find out—if we can." He frowned thoughtfully. "By this time, that bunch from the boat should be searching the island, looking for Ellis. I'm going to try to bring them here *pronto.*"

He drew his automatic, pointed to the sky and fired three times. There was a pause, then three shots answered far to their left. The two men judged that the reports came from close to the Indian village. They waited until they heard a shout, then gave a hail which directed the four survivors of the *Milrey's* crew to the clearing.

Parker watched keenly as the four men walked toward the stone, one by one. The effect of the grisly sight that awaited them was almost identical on all four, although Woodley was more terror-stricken by what he saw than the others. The small man gave a cry and covered his face with trembling hands, a thin moaning seeping out through his fingers. Cole, Desmond and Baker went white at the sight of Ellis's body, but they kept a tight rein on their nerves.

THE elderly millionaire took command, as though he were used to facing difficult situations.

"How was this done?" he demanded, turning to Parker. "Who did it?"

Rex Parker shook his head slowly. Baker was gazing at him and there seemed to be a mocking light in the stocky man's eyes.

"To both your questions I can only say that I don't know," Parker told Cole.

"Well, that's a big help," grunted Baker.

Howard Desmond rolled a cigarette with trembling fingers.

"Ellis—murdered just like Ritchie," he stammered. "Who—who will be next?"

Parker looked sharply at Desmond and turned to Cole.

"Do you, or anybody else, know of any possible reason why Ellis should have been wandering on this island in the middle of the night?"

Parker noticed the glances exchanged by the four men from the *Milrey,* Baker to Woodley to Cole to Desmond. The glance was as electric as a spark, yet none of the four said a word. There was silence, broken only by Woodley's snuffling.

"Well?" asked Rex Parker impatiently. "Can't anybody give me an answer?"

Baker was the first to speak. His voice was surprisingly calm under the circumstances.

"Maybe that's one for the Masked Detective. We don't know. Maybe he went up on the beach to sleep, like I said before, and somebody grabbed him there. They might have brought him here and killed him."

"None of you heard Ellis leave the boat last night?"

Another silence, then one by one the four men shook their heads.

"He turned in with the rest of us," Cole said. "We didn't know he was gone until you woke us up early this morning."

Suddenly a hysterical chatter racketed through the clearing. Parker's eyes jumped toward Woodley. The little man's nerves had cracked and he seemed on the verge of madness. His eyes stared and his mouth worked spasmodically. His voice was almost a shriek.

"That's a lie! We all heard Ellis leave the boat. None of us can sleep on the ketch. We don't dare to sleep, I tell you. I heard Ellis get up and go on deck last night. All of us heard him. What are you trying to cover up by saying you didn't? Are you in on this? Are you three trying to get rid of the rest of us, so you—"

Baker moved swiftly and clapped a hand over Woodley's mouth. Parker sprang across the clearing and tore the stocky man's large hand away.

"Let him talk!" he snapped. "Let him say what he wants to say!"

Baker flushed beneath his deep tan.

"The guy's nuts," he grumbled. "He's liable to say anything. I'm not going to let him rave and have you hick cops pin a pinch on me just because a screwball starts singing."

He glowered at Parker, his big chest heaving, his powerful hands clenched at his sides. Woodley stared at the ground, muttering unintelligibly. Parker's eyes met Baker's in a steely stare before he whirled back to Woodley.

"Come on," he ordered the secretary, "finish what you were going to say."

It was too late. Baker's hand had dammed the flood of words that had been cascading out of Woodley's terrified mouth.

"I'm sorry," he muttered. "I just went to pieces. I didn't mean anything."

Parker shrugged and turned to Guerra. He realized that any attempt to question these men further was useless. There was nothing more he could do here.

"Let's go, Jiminez," he grunted savagely. "We'll leave Ellis here with his friends. They can take care of him."

George Cole nodded, a worried expression on his face, as though he had just begun to fear for his own safety.

"If it's all right with the captain, we'd like to bury him here," he said. "This heat and—"

Captain Guerra glanced at Parker, who gave an imperceptible nod. The Mexican police official granted permission for the burial and followed the crime reporter out of the clearing.

"What now, *amigo?*" he asked when they were out of earshot of the other men.

"I want you to go back to the yacht, Jiminez," said Parker. "You guard Miss Bligh and be sure that she is safe."

"And what will you do?"

"I'm going to try to contact the Masked Detective," stated Rex Parker. "Perhaps he has been able to find Fingers Tashman's hideout. Anyway, I want to be sure that he knows of this third murder."

"Third murder?" Guerra appeared puzzled. "But only two men have been killed here."

"True," admitted Parker, "but don't forget that Harvey Q. Martin was also bound for this Island of Death when he was suddenly stabbed on the cruise ship."

CHAPTER XI

Quarrel Among Thieves

SILENCE hung over the clearing as Parker's and Guerra's footsteps died away into the distance. The four men who stood beside the sacrificial rock were careful not to look at the gruesome corpse lying there in the bright sunlight. No one spoke until all were certain that Parker and the Mexican were out of earshot. Then it was George Cole who broke the silence.

"Well," he asked quietly, "who did it?"

The others stared at him. Woodley moistened his pale lips nervously and blinked his eyes like a puzzled, terrified rabbit. Baker's face flushed and Desmond's brow wrinkled questioningly.

"What—what do you mean?" Woodley stammered finally. "D-do you really th-think one of us k-killed him?"

Cole managed a smile that was more of a sneer than anything else.

"I suppose you're all mystified by this," he said sardonically. "None of you have any idea why Ellis was killed, have you?"

Baker then shook his head angrily.

"Stop talking in riddles," he snapped. "Of course none of us know why Ellis was killed, or Ritchie, either. At least I don't. I haven't any idea."

Cole's bright blue eyes traveled from man to man until they rested coldly on Woodley. The timid secretary shrank under the glare of the elderly man and his hands twitched nervously.

"Why—why are you looking at me like that?" he bleated, near hysteria.

"You told Parker that everybody aboard the ketch heard Ellis get up last night," Cole accused. "You know that's a lie. I didn't hear him. Just what was the idea of trying to put us in a tough spot?"

Arthur Woodley's eyes fell, watching his toe dig into the ground as he spoke in a muffled, apologetic voice.

"I—I thought everybody heard him. I know I did. I was—well, it was a shock to me, all this happening so mysteriously. I lost my head. I wasn't trying to put anybody in a tough spot."

Howard Desmond looked curiously at the other men. He frowned as he ran his fingers through his thick blond hair.

"What possible reason could any of us have for killing Ellis?" he asked. "He was more or less the head of this expedition, the only one who was able to communicate with the Indians for us. None of us was his enemy, as far as I know. It doesn't make any more sense to me than the killing of Ritchie did."

"Huh!" sneered Cole. "I guess you're forgetting that little paper we all signed the day we reached this bloody island,

The agreement we made then, was that whatever we found was to be split up among the survivors of this trip, including the shares of anybody who might"—he paused—"meet with an accident."

He turned to Baker, his eyes hard and suspicious.

"Seems to me that you were the one who suggested that agreement, Baker. You were pretty insistent about its being signed by all of us."

"Sure I was," agreed the stocky, arrogant man, undismayed. "I didn't trust you Cole. When I learned that you were going to let that pal of yours, Harvey Martin, join us here, I wanted something on paper to prove we would all share alike. How did I know but what you big business guys would pull a fast one on us?"

"I still don't see what the agreement has to do with the murder of Ritchie and Ellis," put in Desmond impatiently. "We haven't found anything. We haven't even come close to finding anything. What good would killing those two men do the murderer, if there were nothing to gain by it?"

THE others were silent as Desmond looked quizzically from face to face. There was a puzzled frown on his forehead as he waited for the reply that was not forthcoming. Woodley gnawed his lip. Cole studied the ground intently. Baker was packing a pipe he had taken from his pocket.

"I knew it!" shouted Desmond. "You fellows are keeping something from me. I've felt it ever since the first day we arrived here. Seems to me you were pretty anxious for me to go off by myself and dig while the rest of you stuck together. Then, when I joined up with you again, you told me you hadn't found a thing. Was that true?"

There was no answer. Desmond took three long strides and stood face to face with Cole.

"How about it?" he demanded. "Did you tell the truth when you said you hadn't found anything?"

"Why—why, yes," Cole replied hesitantly.

Desmond looked into the elderly man's eyes for an instant and then turned away, unsatisfied with the answer, but unable to do anything about it. No one noticed a faint rustling in the brush to their left.

Baker and Woodley returned to the beach for the mattocks and shovels they had brought with them from the ketch for their expedition's operations. On the shore, as Baker was bending to pick up a bundle of digging implements, Woodley voiced a worried question.

"Do you think Desmond knows anything?"

Baker cast a quick glance around him. He scowled at a big rock a short distance away.

"Keep quiet, you fool!" he snarled under his breath. "Somebody might overhear you. If Parker and the Mexican coast guard captain found out, they'd pin the two murders on us, sure."

Woodley's eyes filled with fear. It was obvious that the little man lived in a state of perpetual panic.

"All right," he whispered, trembling and looking around frightenedly. "But do you think Desmond's wise?"

"Not that lug!" Baker spat contemptuously. "He doesn't know anything. The guy is just plain dumb. I kept close watch on him that day we were digging in the other part of the island. I know he stayed where he was sent."

"Good!" sighed Woodley in relief. "I'm glad of that."

Jim Baker shouldered the bundle of shovels and picks. The thick-set man's face was hard. The pipe jutted out of the side of his mouth aggressively.

"Desmond doesn't know about it," he said grimly, "but you do. Cole does and Ellis did. What Cole said about that agreement makes sense. Now that we did find something, the less of us there are to share in it, the better for the guy that's left." He scowled fiercely. "But if it's you who did these killings, Woodley, I'm warning you not to try it on me, see? You fool around with me and I'll rub you out like that!" Baker snapped his thick fingers. "And don't forget it."

"I won't, either, gentlemen!" said a cold voice as a startling figure stepped out from behind the rock.

It was a man dressed in dark clothing, with a soft hat pulled down over his eyes and a mask hiding the upper part of his face.

"The Mask!" cried Baker.

"That's right," said the man in black. "And what I've overheard in the last few minutes makes me feel that both of you might have committed two murders."

WHEN he had sent Guerra back to the yacht to protect Winnie, Rex Parker had gone to the spot in the jungle where he and the girl had hidden a complete change of clothing and two revolvers, just in case Parker wanted to assume the character of the Masked Detective. Parker had quickly changed and returned to the clearing in time to overhear the conversation of the four men. Then he had managed to edge around so that he could also hear Woodley and Baker talking as he listened from behind the rock.

"Get him!" shouted Baker. "This guy knows too much!"

He flung his armful of digging tools at the Mask. Parker leaped nimbly to one side and the shovels and picks clattered to the sand. His right fist lashed out when Baker flung himself at him. There was the *crack* of bone against bone as the Mask's knuckles thudded against the stocky man's chin.

"Kill him, Baker!" cried Woodley, dancing around excitedly, but not making any effort to join in the fight. "Kill him!"

Baker and the Mask closed in, raining hard blows at each other. They were both taking plenty of punishment and giving back all they received. Cole and Desmond had heard

Woodley shouting. They came running down the beach.

"What's going on here?" demanded Desmond. "Have you caught the murderer, Baker?"

Baker was too busy fighting to answer, but suddenly a hard blow from the Mask sent the thick-set man reeling back. Snarling a vicious curse, Baker drew his revolver from his back pocket.

"Drop that gun!" snapped the Mask.

A murderous light gleamed in Jim Baker's eyes as he lunged forward, gun in hand. The Mask kicked out with his right foot the instant before Baker's finger tightened on the trigger. His toe caught the thick-set man's wrist with such force that it sent the gun flying into the air just as it roared. The bullet whistled harmlessly across the beach and clipped the leaves off a branch in the jungle.

"That'll be enough of this!" The Mask's own revolvers were in his hands, covering the four men as he spoke. "Don't any of you try anything foolish, or I'll put a bullet through you."

"A bit high-handed, aren't you?" asked George Cole angrily. "I suppose you're the man they call the Masked Detective."

"I am," said the Mask. "And I know now that you have been lying to my friend, Rex Parker, and to the captain of the Mexican Coast Guard."

"Lying?" repeated Cole. "What do you mean?"

"This expedition of yours didn't come to this island for the purpose of collecting Indian relics," said the Mask sternly. "That was just a blind. You're here after Spanish treasure—treasure left by the pirates who used this island as a base for operations."

"What if we are?" challenged the elderly man. "I can't see that it is any of your business."

The Masked Detective Bets on Death

IN

THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS

A Complete Book-Length Novel
Featuring Rex Parker on
the Trail of a Spy-Ring that
Operates a Race-Track Racket

By

C. K. M. SCANLON

•

FEATURED NEXT ISSUE

"It became my business when two of your party were murdered. It's not usually my custom to eavesdrop, but I learned from Parker that you refused to give him any information, so I listened to you talking in the clearing a little while ago."

"I thought I heard rustling in the brush," said Desmond, "but I didn't pay any attention to it." He scowled. "All right, then you heard us. You know of the agreement that we signed, that we were to share alike in any treasure we might have found."

"YES, I know," answered the Mask. "And you were fools to sign any such paper. Don't you realize what a temptation that must be to the killer, if he is one of you? If the rest of you are dead, he doesn't need to share the treasure with anyone."

"I know it now," responded Desmond bitterly. "I've realized it ever since we found Ellis burnt to death on the rock, poor devil. I was willing to believe that the natives might have killed Ritchie—but I don't feel that way about it since I've seen Ellis."

"Of course not. It's too systematic to be the work of Indians. You know now that any one of you might be the killer."

"Yes," said Desmond. "But why? We haven't even found any treasure yet."

"Haven't you?" The Mask smiled grimly. "Maybe you had better talk to Baker and Woodley about that."

"What do you mean?" Desmond glared at the masked man and then swung around to face the others. "So you did find something! You've been lying to me!"

"Aw, calm down, Desmond,'' grunted Baker. "Don't you see this guy is trying to work a trick on us, to get us fighting among ourselves over a treasure that we ain't even located?" The thick-set man's eyes gleamed. "How do we know this guy really is the Mask? Have any of you ever seen him before?"

"No, I haven't, for one," said Cole quickly. "Maybe you've got something there, Baker. This man could be the killer himself. Maybe he murdered Ritchie and Ellis and is trying to get the rest of us for some reason of his own."

"It's a good bluff, but it won't work, Baker," stated the Mask. "Parker and Captain Guerra know that I'm here on the island, and they also know why. You can't frame me with either of those murders, so don't try it."

As he talked, he had been gradually edging back toward the dense undergrowth of the jungle that fringed the beach not far behind him. The others inched slowly toward him, unconscious in their excitement that they were doing so.

"Why are you here?" asked Cole tersely. "Tell us that!"

"To try to find out if this island isn't the base for the submarine pirates who have been raiding in these waters," answered the Mask. "The same pirates who murdered your friend, Martin Harvey, Mr. Cole."

"Then I hope you get them!" exclaimed Cole. "Martin was my friend, the best I ever had. I want to see the men who murdered him brought to justice."

"They will be," promised the Mask. "Now turn around, all of you, and face toward the water."

The four men hesitated, then grudgingly did as they were told when the Mask repeated the command with chilled steel in his voice. For a long time they stood there, grumbling and waiting for him to search them, shoot or bark another order.

"What's the idea?" demanded Baker finally. "Are you going to keep us standing like this all day?" He glanced back over his shoulder and uttered an oath. "He's gone!"

THE other three men whirled to find that Baker was right. The Mask had disappeared into the jungle.

The four were alone on the beach.

"So that was the Masked Detective," said Cole slowly. "I think that the murderer had better be careful, or he will find himself in real danger from now on. I don't believe I would like the Mask to suspect that I might be a killer."

"How do you know he doesn't?" asked Desmond. "Everybody keeps insisting the murderer might be one of us."

"As a matter of fact, I don't know what the Mask does suspect," admitted George Bliss Cole. "I'd like to know, though. I imagine it would be both interesting and enlightening. But let's get this business of burying Ellis over with."

He glanced along the beach as a dark-haired man wearing a gray tweed jacket and sports trousers strolled casually away from the Indian village. The other men looked in the same direction.

"There's Parker," said Desmond. "Been questioning the Indians, I guess. Come on, Cole is right. Let's bury Ellis' body."

CHAPTER XII

A Revolving Table

BEFORE an hour had passed, Rex Parker, Winnie Bligh and the little Mexican captain were exploring the island. Parker had changed quickly back to his other clothes, hidden the black suit he had worn as the Masked Detective and quickly circled around to come out on the beach near the Indian village. He had signaled the yacht to send a boat ashore and had been taken to the *San Marco*.

He had told the captain nothing of his experience on the beach with the four men. Those on board the yacht had not seen the encounter of the crew of the ketch with the Mask. Upon returning to the yacht, Parker had found that Winnie had changed her mind about washing her hair and was anxious to go ashore with the two men to help them explore the island.

Now the trio was climbing the steep ascent to the peak of the volcano that loomed over Moaxacelo, the Island of Death. They toiled up the steep slope, stopping every now and then to catch their breath. The fierce sun beat down on the two men and the girl with enervating intensity, reducing their clothing to sodden rags and making perspiration course down their faces.

"This Ameena chooses a most strange place for his dwelling," panted Guerra. "I wish he would move to a more—what you say—accessible home, where it would be nearer and cooler."

"So do I," agreed Winnie. "And I'm also beginning to wish that I had stayed on board the yacht and washed my hair."

"Cheer up, both of you," said Parker. "It's only a little farther on. We'll be at the top in a few minutes."

"And what do you expect to find there, Rex?" asked Winnie.

"I hope I can trace my way back to Fingers Tashman's underground hideout, or at least to the entrance," explained Parker. "I've got a fair idea of its distance from the volcano crater. I counted steps and turns as I was being taken along by those two thugs. But in what direction it lies is another matter. Mopy and Stud must have taken a fairly direct route to the crater, not expecting me to live long enough to do any back-tracking. With a little luck, we should be able to find it."

"And what then, *amigo?*" the Mexican queried.

"Haven't decided," said Parker. "We may need help in rounding up that gang. There must be quite a bunch, if the crew of that pirate sub is with them. But first we've got to find the entrance to the place."

The trio reached the crater rim. Gusts of sulphurous vapor wafted up intermittently from the subterranean crematory into which the two gangsters had hurtled to their death the night before.

Parker pointed to a place on the crater rim where the lava had been broken and scuffed by the furious struggle of the preceding night.

"It was here that those two killers tried to throw me over the edge. The trail must lead straight down the side of the mountain from this spot."

"How horrible!" exclaimed Winnie, peering down over the edge of the crater and then moving back with a shudder.

Carefully Parker descended the slope of the mountain, his eyes studying every inch of the ground, searching for some sign that would show him the trail. He gave a muffled exclamation as he saw a bit of broken lava several feet from the crater rim.

"Winnie, Jiminez—down this way!" he called. "I think we've hit it!"

WORKING slowly, Parker climbed down the mountain, and Winnie and the captain came after him. They were moving along the north side of the volcano, following a trail which few men besides Parker could have picked up.

Guerra marveled at Parker's ability to spot the tiniest mark, the faintest clue, but Winnie was scarcely impressed. It was no more than she expected. She knew that since Parker had become the Masked Detective, he had trained himself to notice the slightest details, whether they were in the city, or in rugged country, such as this on the island.

"We should be getting close now," Parker told his companions. "This is about the distance I came with those two members of the pirate gang."

Abruptly the trail ended on a steep incline of bare lava. Parker examined the ground minutely, searching for something which would tell him the secret of the hidden door through which he had emerged the previous night with his two guards. There was nothing to indicate where the door could be. Tumbled hunks of loose lava were scattered over the incline. There was no rock big enough to hide the opening.

Parker tugged at some of the larger pieces of lava and frowned as they came away easily in his grasp.

"This should be about it," he said in a puzzled voice. "The trail ends here. There are no marks farther on. The slope of the hill is exactly the same pitch as the slope I stepped out onto when I came out of the tunnel. The grade levels off farther on, you see. This is the spot, all right, but I can't find a place where that door could be concealed."

"Maybe they got tired of using that door and closed it off for good," suggested Winnie, tired and anxious to get back to the yacht.

Parker stared at her for a moment, his eyes thoughtful.

"That's it, Cap'n," he said slowly. "I think you've got the right hunch."

He cast about in a wide circle, his eyes on the ground. At a point a few feet above the spot where the last trail marking had been found, he bent low and stared at the hard, rocky surface of the mountain. Then he straightened and looked up the side of the volcano. What he saw brought a shout to his lips.

"Look, both of you! Up there—what do you see?"

Winnie peered in the direction that Parker indicated, while the Mexican shaded his eyes and gazed at the same spot.

"I see nothing," objected Guerra. "Nothing but rock that looks very hot and uncomfortable. No, wait! There is some kind of mark in the lava. What do you make of it, *amigo?*"

Without replying, Parker turned and looked down the mountain slope, toward the fringe of palms which waved in the wind about a hundred feet below the spot where the trail ended. He smiled as he caught a glimpse of a large rock, half-buried in the luxuriant vegetation at the edge of the jungle.

"There's the door," he told Guerra and the girl, pointing, "or at least what was the door. Winnie was right. It has been closed for good. Let's go down and examine it."

The trio climbed to the edge of the depression in the lava.

"I still don't understand," said Winnie. "What does that rock below have to do with this hole in the lava, Rex?"

"It shows that Tashman sealed up the entrance to his cave."

"How?" asked Guerra.

"He probably set off a charge of dynamite inside the tunnel. The noise of the explosion could have been muffled so we wouldn't hear it on the other side of the island. The blast sent the rock used as a door down the hill. That's it down below. And the charge also loosened a slide of lava from above the entrance, bringing down tons of rock to hide the place where the entrance had been."

CAPTAIN Guerra mopped his brow, his fat face despondent.

"I shall hate to dig through all that rock in this hot sun," he groaned.

Rex Parker smiled and shook his head.

"There wouldn't be much use in digging, even if we had brought the tools to do it with," he said. "It would take too long, and Fingers Tashman and his gang would have plenty of warning before we got through to the tunnel. Mopy and Stud spoke about another entrance to the hideout. We've got to find that other entrance."

"And that won't be fun, either," declared Winnie. "Maybe we'd better do that some other time, Rex. This heat is getting a bit too much for me."

"Ah, *senorita,*" exclaimed Guerra, "now you speak the words of wisdom. It would delight me to do nothing but remain in the cool shade and be a worthless idler for the rest of the day. We have done enough for now, *Senor* Parker. Come, let us go back to the yacht."

"I guess you're right," admitted Rex wearily.

They descended to the edge of the jungle below. Just as they reached it, a hard-faced man dressed in a white linen suit stepped into view from the shadows of the brush. He was casually twirling an automatic around one finger by the trigger guard. Parker hoped that the safety catch was on, otherwise the gun might accidentally go off.

"Good morning," said Fingers Tashman suavely. "I had no idea that Ameena had visitors. Afraid that was a mistake. You see, the god of the crater is a sort of recluse. He doesn't like strangers."

"Fingers Tashman, isn't it?" asked Parker politely, his right hand edging toward the gun in the shoulder holster beneath the left lapel of his tweed coat. "I'd heard you were on the island."

"You did?" Tashman looked surprised. "How?"

Parker grinned. "A little Indian told me."

"I hope he also told you to keep your hand away from that gun under your coat," snapped Tashman. "I've got four of my men back in the brush, covering you with rifles. Impulsive boys, too. I can't seem to make them stop shooting at the drop of a hat." He removed his expensive panama and significantly held it in his left hand. "You understand."

"Certainly." Parker drew his hand away from his coat lapel. "You seem to have a lot of impulsive men. That same Indian told me that Mopy and Stud were so impulsive last night that they fell into the crater."

"Oh," said Tashman with stone-faced calmness. "I wondered what had become of those lugs. The Indian understood English, eh?"

"Perfectly." Parker smiled. "He happened to be the Masked Detective in disguise."

Jiminez Guerra uttered a Spanish oath and stared at Parker.

"Then—" began the Mexican.

"Quiet, Jiminez!" said Winnie swiftly.

"The Masked Detective?" exclaimed Tashman. "And I turn him over to a couple of dumb heels like Mopy and Stud to bump off! Will somebody please kick me?"

"I should be delighted," offered Guerra eagerly.

"Don't get smart," snapped the leader of the submarine pirates, glaring at the little Mexican. "Since you appear to be the Mask's pals, I guess I'll have to hold you prisoners until he comes looking for you."

"And then?" asked Parker.

"Then we'll just bump off the whole bunch of you," said Fingers Tashman. "There are too many people cluttering up this island, anyway."

"I—I think I'm going to faint," moaned Winnie, dropping weakly to the big rock a little to one side of Tashman.

AS she sat there, the brush that grew all around her hid the girl from the men with rifles who were lurking in the jungle. She reached swiftly into a pocket of her slacks, as though searching for a handkerchief. Her slender hand appeared, holding a neat and efficient-looking little automatic.

"Please drop that gun, Mr. Tashman," she ordered. "I don't know a thing about firearms. They seem to go off so unexpectedly, and I'd really hate to kill you."

Fingers Tashman cursed and glowered at her, but the expression in Winnie's big blue eyes warned him that this girl was dangerous. He let his gun drop to the ground.

"Fine." Parker laughed and slapped the gang leader on the back. Apparently the two men had suddenly become great friends. "And as it happens, I also have my gun covering you from under my coat now, Fingers. Don't you think you had better send your men away?"

"What happens if I don't?" snarled Tashman, all his suaveness gone as he found himself trapped.

"Please!" begged Guerra. "Even I can guess. And me, I do not like to talk of such gruesome things. The *senor* Parker kills those who do not do what he says—just like that!"

CHAPTER XIII

Plot Below the Sea

FINGERS TASHMAN was impressed, for he was judging these other men by himself. He knew that he would not hesitate to kill under the circumstances, and he felt that Parker and even the girl might do likewise.

"Hey, Butch!" he called loudly. "It's all right. You and the rest beat it. I'll join you later."

"Optimist," said Guerra softly.

"Okay, Chief," came a shout from Butch Dugan. "We're leaving."

The crashing in the brush grew steadily fainter as the men with rifles retreated and then disappeared into the distance. Fingers Tashman stood scowling as he heard the men go.

"Now what?" he demanded.

"Afraid we'll have to take you to a yacht and hold you prisoner," said Parker. "But you'll act as though you are a friend of ours, if you know what's good for you."

"All right," grunted Tashman. "You and the dame can put away them guns."

"Certainly." Winnie dropped her automatic back into the pocket of her loose slacks as she stood up. "You know, I feel a lot better now."

"So do I," said Guerra. "But somewhere I hear a man sing that a policeman's lot is not a happy one. Me, I am still sure that he must have meant the coast guard officer, too."

The little Mexican picked up Tashman's gun and dropped it into a pocket of his uniform. Just as he did so, at least forty Indians suddenly loomed out of the jungle and silently surrounded the group in the clearing at the edge of the brush. They all carried spears and knives and they looked dangerous. The chief spoke swiftly in the Carib tongue.

"What's he saying?" asked Parker, looking at Guerra anxiously.

"That the voice of Ameena has told them to be our friends," translated Guerra. "But the big voice of the god of the mountain says that the man in white is their friend, also."

"Man in white?" repeated Winnie, looking at Tashman's linen suit. "Why, they mean him!"

"It is true that I am your friend," said Tashman quickly in the Indian language. "Tell these strangers that the man in white must be free to roam the island, that they must let him go and not follow."

The chief of the Indians spoke swiftly to Guerra. The little Mexican listened and then said a few words.

"Tashman has got us licked for now," said the captain in English. "If we don't let him go free, the Indians are likely to make things quite difficult. It is too bad."

"Be seeing you guys again!"

Fingers grinned as the circle of Indians opened to let him through. He departed hastily. The ring around the two men and the girl closed and the Indians stood there impassively until Tashman had disappeared. Then the natives moved quietly away, heading back for their village on the beach.

"What did they mean by the big voice of Ameena?" asked Guerra. "I do not understand this thing they say."

"I don't know," said Parker, "but I suspect that Tashman has something to do with that voice." He frowned. "There's one thing I want you to understand, Jiminez. When I told Tashman that Indian they captured last night was the Masked Detective in disguise, I was only bluffing. I didn't want him to know that I was the Indian."

"*Si,*" said Guerra. "For the moment I thought you were the Masked Detective, but of course this could not be."

"Of course not," assented Winnie. "The Mask is brave and strong. He has brains. He wouldn't let a bunch of Indians take his prisoner away from him, but Rex Parker did."

Parker glared at her.

"I wish you'd stayed on board the yacht and washed your hair," he growled. "Come on, let's get back to the ship before Tashman sends his gang after us."

HOURS later, with the full moon riding high above Moaxacelo, Rex Parker sprawled at full length on the forward deck of the *San Marco.* During the afternoon he had paid another visit to the *Milrey* and talked to the men on the ketch, but he had learned nothing that he did not already know. There was no suspicion in their minds that he was actually the Masked Detective, whom they had encountered on the beach that morning.

"Desmond is sure the other three have found the treasure and are stalling about it," Parker decided. "He's worried because he can't prove it."

Parker had talked over the whole situation with Winnie and Guerra. Now the captain had gone to his cabin to sleep, but Parker had decided to remain on deck. He had refreshed himself by slipping into a pair of bathing trunks and taking a swim around the yacht. Now, still wet from his cooling bath in the waters of the Gulf, he was lying on deck, waiting.

The reason for Parker's vigil was

not wholly clear in his own mind, but there were many angles he wanted to consider. The murder of the two men from the *Milrey* was one of them. The trapping of Fingers Tashman and his gang was another. Parker realized that if the authorities knew that the submarine pirates' base was located on the island, they would come there at once and clean out the place.

But to notify them would mean risking the chance that Tashman and his gang might get away. The radio tube Parker had found on the volcano convinced him that the gang had a short wave radio in their hideout. If so, they would be able to pick up any message sent to U. S. or Mexican ships, calling for a raid on the island.

As the Masked Detective, he was anxious to get the murderer of the three men who had been part of the museum expedition. He also wanted to capture the submarine pirates himself, if it were humanly possible to do so.

He lay there, thoughts racing through his head. Suddenly he tensed. Faintly—so faintly that it could scarcely be heard even by Parker's trained ears—he detected the sound of scratching, a tiny *thump,* and then more scratching.

The noise seemed to be coming from directly under the hull of the *San Marco.* He got to his feet and peered over the side. No, the yacht was not drifting into shallow water and scraping the sandy bottom. His eyes turned toward the shore. The surf line was in its usual place. No unusual tide changes cut the depth of the water beneath the *San Marco.*

"Better have a look-see," he told himself.

Slipping over the side, he dropped into the water in a clean dive that took him far below the surface. He dived almost squarely into a man who clung to the underside of the *San Marco's* hull!

The man wore a bulbous diving helmet, supplied with oxygen by a tank strapped to his back. On top of the helmet was a penetrating light which was trained on the underside of the yacht. The man was attaching an ominously tubular object to the keel of the *San Marco.*

PARKER doubled up, kicked and shot away from the hull of the yacht and the man who had turned his big single eye toward him as he dived. The light snapped out. Parker swirled in a fast turn and swam at the man in the diving helmet, his hands reaching for this prowler of the Gulf bottom.

His outstretched hand slid off the smooth diving helmet. The fingers of his other hand, however, reached lower to grasp the belt of the diver's suit.

The diver wrenched himself away. Parker turned in the water to execute a swift circle around the place where the man had been. Before the light had snapped off, Parker had seen the underwater prowler's heavy belt, outfitted with a long knife and various tools. The stranger, Parker reasoned, would be going for the knife, stabbing at the hands in the blackness.

Making a turn in the water, Parker encountered a wire which slashed his face as he swam into it. The salt water, pouring into the open wound, stung with the viciousness of a wasp. Parker stopped, grasped the wire in both hands and pulled with all the strength of his powerful muscles.

He felt something give slightly and gave another tug. Whatever was on one end of the wire ripped loose and the wire went slack.

"Bomb," said Parker mentally. "That bird was attaching a bomb to the hull of the yacht. Good thing I discovered him before he finished bolting it on, otherwise I never could have pulled it loose."

The light atop the helmet of the diver flashed on again as the prowler searched for the man who had attacked him. Parker saw the Cyclops eye of the helmet turn toward him, watched the diver kick away from the hull to come at him, the knife gleaming wickedly.

He plunged forward to meet the attack. His hand clutched the knife-arm of the diver and held it in a grip of steel. The other man doubled up and kicked savagely at Parker's stomach. Parker countered with a blow to the chest with his free hand. Meanwhile his grip on the diver's arm tightened ruthlessly.

Parker turned in the water, hauling the arm up over his shoulder. He felt a stunning blow on the back of his head as the diver butted him with his helmet. Blackness threatened to take possession of Parker's brain, but he fought his way back to consciousness and kept twisting at the arm. The diver battered at Parker's body with his other hand, scratching, tearing, trying to reach his foe's eyes with gouging fingers.

Parker's lungs began to ache as he increased his pressure on the diver's arm. Another twist and he saw the knife fall out of nerveless fingers and slither slowly out of sight toward the Gulf floor.

Rex Parker turned and kicked his way in a curving sweep over the diver's head. Behind his assailant, he reached for the oxygen tank strapped to the other man's back. Before the diver could turn, Parker seized the tank, braced his feet in the small of the underwater prowler's back. He pulled, straining with all his power at the tank. A *snap* and the straps parted. The tank tore loose from the harness and dangled from the helmet.

Now Parker's lungs were close to bursting. Bright lights exploded before his eyes as his pounding heart screamed for oxygen. Still he clung to the tank, straining at the connecting tube between the tank and the helmet. His teeth clenched and his eyes bulged in the agony of the struggle. His whole frame was racked by the torturing pain of smothered lungs, yet he continued to pull at his adversary's oxygen tank.

"I can't do it!" he half-sobbed silently. "I can't stay under any longer. And when I let go, this man will be on top of me."

He gave one last desperate jerk and felt exultation sweep over him as the connecting tube parted. Oxygen bubbles foamed in an underwater geyser. He saw the diver claw futilely at his helmet as the water rushed in.

CHAPTER XIV

A Plotter Exposed

REX PARKER abandoned his grip and shot to the surface, nearly unconscious. When he reached the top, the air was sweeter than the finest vintage wine. He gulped deeply of the life-giving oxygen, treading water until he regained his strength. Then he doubled up and dived toward the bottom again.

He found no sign of the diver beneath the surface of the Gulf. The helmet lay on its side on the sandy bed, close to the belt which contained the batteries that powered the light. Parker paused long enough to grab up the round helmet before turning toward the air again.

Back on the surface, he swam to the *San Marco* and with one hand pulled himself up the rope ladder that dangled over the side. As he did so, Captain Guerra appeared on deck, stared in alarm at the helmet in Parker's grasp.

"Rex!" exclaimed the little Mexican. "Where did you come from? What is wrong?"

"No time to talk now, Jiminez," snapped Parker. "Rouse the crew and move the yacht away from this spot. A bomb has been planted under us!"

Guerra did not stop to argue or question. He dashed down the companionway to arouse his men while Parker started raising the anchor. In a matter of seconds the yacht was in motion, steaming away from its mooring spot.

It had not gone more than fifty feet when there was a jarring, thudding reverberation which shook the craft from bow to stern. But the *San Marco* was safe, thanks to the quick thinking of the Masked Detective.

Parker had realized that the bomb below was doubtlessly still connected to the wire that ran to it from the shore, and that whoever was on the other end of the line would set off the charge.

Winnie appeared on deck with the captain beside her. They asked excited questions and Parker explained swiftly. He told of his underwater battle with the man in the diving helmet.

"I'd like to know who he was," Parker finished. "I don't know if it was a member of Fingers Tashman's crew, or one of the men from the ketch."

Lights winked on in the cabin of the *Milrey,* moored some distance from the yacht, as the *San Marco* again dropped anchor. The searchlight of the yacht swept the water with its bright disk of light. The white bellies of hundreds of fish shone wanly in the light as they floated to the top, killed by the concussion of the explosion.

"Look!" cried Winnie with a shudder as she stood on the deck of the yacht, peering over the side.

Parker nodded grimly and Guerra cursed under his breath in Spanish. Among the fish was another white form, larger than the finny victims of the blast. It was the body of a man.

The captain barked an order to some of his crew who had come on deck. They hauled the body up over the side. There was no doubt that this was the diver who had tried to attach the bomb to the hull of the yacht.

"It's Butch Dugan," said Parker as he gazed down at the face of the dead man, "one of Tashman's bunch. He's the man I fought with when he was leading the submarine raiders who came on board the cruise ship. Remember him, Winnie?"

"Yes." Winnie nodded and turned away. "But I'd rather not look at him like that."

"Take him below and put him in one of the extra cabins," Guerra ordered.

THE crew hauled the body away, and Winnie breathed a sigh of relief.

"Dugan was the diver," continued Parker, "but who was the man on the other end of the wire? Who set off the bomb?"

"Probably Fingers Tashman," Winnie offered. "I'm beginning to get the idea he doesn't like us."

"Maybe it was Tashman." Parker frowned thoughtfully. "I'm not sure of it, though. If any of that bunch from the ketch come over to find out what's wrong, we'd better stall. Remember that."

"Yes, sir," said Winnie meekly, and then she smiled. "You know, Rex, there are times when you remind me of Captain Bligh."

"Who is this Captain Bligh?" demanded Guerra. "He is the *senorita's* father, perhaps?"

"No." Parker laughed. "Just her mean old uncle. Sometimes she acts like him. That's why I call her Cap'n."

"By the saints!" exclaimed Guerra. "Here, I say, is the great romance when I look at you two, but maybe I am wrong, *si?*"

"Not at all, Captain," said Winnie sweetly. "Rex adores me, but he has the quaintest ways of showing it, like putting ground glass in my mashed potatoes and playing other coy little tricks."

"Don't pay any attention to her, Jiminez," Parker warned. "She knows I think she's swell. She's just fishing."

"Fishing?" The little Mexican was puzzled. "With what?"

"With the wiles of a beauty expert for bait," said Parker with a grin.

The sound of creaking oars caused the trio on deck to turn. In silence they watched the dinghy of the *Milrey* approach. The four men from the ketch piled over the side of the *San Marco,* babbling questions.

"What was that explosion we heard?" demanded George Cole.

"It must have been some undersea outlet of the volcano," explained Parker quickly. "I think we're safe now, but it washed up a body. We had our crew take the man below. You might be able to identify him, if you'll take a look at the corpse."

"All right," said Cole.

The other men nodded.

Parker and Guerra led them below to the cabin where the dead man had been placed on a bunk. Winnie remained on deck.

Baker uttered an involuntary gasp as he saw the dead man's face.

"Dugan! Butch Dugan!"

Parker swung on the stocky man, his eyes fixed intently on Baker's face.

"You know him?"

Baker nodded dumbly. The other members of the *Milrey's* crew stared with wide eyes at the thick-set man.

"Who is he?" snapped Parker.

Baker hesitated, his mouth agape. "I—I think it's a man named Dugan—Butch Dugan," he faltered. "Looks like him. I knew him a long time ago, but I haven't seen him in years."

"And how long has it been since you've seen Fingers Tashman?" asked Parker swiftly.

Jim Baker's face grew pale. He half-raised a hand in protest.

"Tashman?" he echoed. "Fingers Tashman? Why—why, I don't know anybody by that name."

It was obvious to everybody in the cabin that Baker was lying. Parker turned to Guerra.

"Captain," he said quietly, "here's your man."

Baker staggered forward, a wild look in his eyes.

"What do you mean?" he asked hoarsely.

"I mean," said Parker, his voice as cutting as a whip, "that you and Fingers Tashman planned the murder of Ritchie and Ellis. Evidently your plan was to kill off the others, one by one, and then share the treasure with Tashman."

Baker stared at him.

"You're crazy!" he shouted. "I haven't seen Tashman in years. I don't know anything about how Ellis and Ritchie were killed. What are you lugs doing—trying to frame me?"

"How about the treasure?" insisted Parker.

"What treasure?" Howard Desmond broke in excitedly.

REX PARKER faced the young, blond-haired man.

"The treasure that's hidden somewhere on your boat," he said. "I don't know what it is, but it's some heavy metal, probably gold."

"Then the Masked Detective was right!" exclaimed Desmond, glaring at the three other men from the *Milrey.* "He knew that we were after treasure and he said that some of you had found it. You managed to make me believe that the Masked Detective was mistaken—"

"He wasn't," interrupted Parker. "They did find some sort of treasure."

"I knew it!" Desmond barked at Cole. "You've been holding out on me. You and Baker and Woodley did find the treasure while you were sending me off on wild-goose chases. I've got a good mind to—"

Cole shrank back, a hand raised to ward off the blow which Desmond had started.

"All right," the elderly man said quickly. "I'll tell. What Parker says now and what the Masked Detective said on the beach is true. There is treasure aboard the *Milrey.* We found it several days ago—an old bronze cannon filled with doubloons, plate, a little gold dust—pirate stuff."

Desmond's voice cracked with the intensity of his fury.

"So you intended to hold out on me, did you? You meant to murder me the way you killed Ellis and Ritchie, eh? Well, I've been doublecrossed, so I can talk now!"

He swung back toward Parker, pointing a shaking finger at the stocky, thick-set man.

"His name isn't Baker. It's Humphries. 'Coconut' Humphries, they used to call him back in the days when he was a rum-runner and a smuggler. He didn't know that Ellis had told me who he really was."

Baker's face had gone deathly as Desmond talked. When the young man had finished, there was a silence. It was broken at last by Cole's rusty voice.

"Is that true, Baker?"

The stocky man wore a hunted look as he answered.

"Yeah, it's true, part of it. My name is Humphries, all right. Maybe I did a little smuggling, years back, but I swear I didn't kill Ellis and Ritchie!"

Suddenly Baker lunged for the cabin door. The rest raced after him, following him up on deck. They were not far behind him when Baker dived over the rail.

GUERRA'S gun whipped out and the little Mexican sighted on Baker's head as it emerged about ten feet from the yacht. Parker struck the captain's arm and knocked the revolver up in the air before Guerra could shoot.

"We want him alive," panted Parker. "I'm sure the Masked Detective will want to question him. Humphries, eh? No wonder I thought his face was familiar. I've seen it in the rogues gallery."

"All right!" exclaimed Desmond, climbing down the rope ladder and stepping into the dinghy. "Come on, men. We'll get him!"

The other two men from the *Milrey* leaped after him into the boat. It was then that the green flame leaped high into the air on the crest of the volcano that loomed over Moaxacelo. Those on the yacht and in the dinghy gaped at the plume of fire which streaked up into the sky, casting its unearthly light over the island.

CHAPTER XV

Tracking Down a God

THE eerie green light made the scene seem strange and unreal. The dinghy had cast off and the three men in the boat were rowing furiously in pursuit of the swimming man. Parker stood on the deck of the yacht beside Guerra. He was still clad in his damp bathing trunks.

"What happened, Rex?" demanded Winnie as she joined them. "Why did Baker run away?"

"Jiminez will tell you," said Parker. "I'm going ashore."

"But this Baker," protested Guerra. "We are letting him get away. Those men will not return him to us, if they catch him. Of that I am sure."

"You stay here with Winnie," ordered Parker. "Baker isn't the man we want. I just said that to bring the real killer out into the open and I think it may work."

Before they could question him further, he dived over the rail and plunged into the Gulf. He came up and started swimming for the shore. As his arms drove through the water, Parker kept his head above the surface, watching the volcano peak.

He saw a tremendous figure raise itself in front of the green glare. It was the figure of a human giant, dressed in a raggedly fringed robe. The figure stood with arms outstretched, boomed out a voice which thundered down from the hills. It spoke in the Indian dialect. Guerra listened as he stood beside Winnie on the deck of the yacht.

"Who am I?" roared the voice.

"A-meen-a!" The wail came back from the Indian village.

Parker increased his speed. He passed Baker, some fifty yards to one side, and saw the thick-set man turning a desperate face toward him. Then Baker churned frantically through the water trying to escape, the three men in the dinghy who were bearing down on him. Parker kept on toward the beach, using a fast crawl stroke that sent him plowing through the water in a hurry.

The voice was still thundering from the mountain and the Indians in the village were wailing their responses as Parker waded up on shore and sprang into the jungle. He headed for the spot where he had left the Masked Detective disguise carefully hidden.

He found it, grateful that he had left a complete outfit of clothing and two guns hidden there. He dressed quickly, then dropped the guns into their holsters and adjusted the black domino across his face.

Once more the Masked Detective was about to roam the mysterious island.

He began moving at top speed through the jungle, heading straight for the volcano peak. The eerie figure still stood there with arms outstretched, its sonorous voice booming out into the hushed night air.

The tone of the savages in the village had changed. Instead of the usual mournful chant, the replies to the roaring voice from the mountain were strong, and there was the *thump* of drums, beating time with the chant.

"Wish I knew what that fellow on the mountain is telling them," the Mask muttered as he plunged on. "From the Indians' answer, it must be something that can cause plenty of trouble."

Creepers and vines were hampering his progress, but he was glad that he was no longer barefoot and with only his bathing trunks to protect him from the thorny brush.

HE neared the outer fringe of palms at the foot of the mountain and increased his pace as the going grew easier. Then the steep slope of the mountain forced him to move more slowly as he began the difficult ascent of the lava-strewn side of the volcano.

The voice from the mountain top was thunderous in the Mask's ears now. He peered up at the green flame, which threw its dazzling brilliance high into the sky. He was unable to see any moving figures at the peak. The giant stood alone, seemingly oblivious to the approach of the man who neared the crest.

The Mask flattened himself to the ground as he wriggled closer. At length he found himself directly under the gigantic figure of Ameena.

"Huh!" he snorted in contempt. "I expected something like that."

The giant was a framework of bamboo, firmly planted in the lava rim of the crater. It was draped with cloth, its head an immense thing of carved wood. The whole contraption, he saw, could be dismantled in a few moments and packed into a comparatively small space. Wires which led from the hinged joints of the statue's arms led over the rim of the volcano.

But it was the source of the searing green flame which interested the Mask most strongly. He found a long container, similar to an acetylene tank, with a snakelike flexible hose, from the nozzle of which spurted the dazzling flame.

Bending low and holding an arm over his face, Parker found the valves of the gas tank and turned the screws tight. The flame guttered and then died. The Mask stooped over the contraption and muttered an oath.

"So that's it! An old *Flamenwerfer*—a flame-thrower—like the kind they used in the first World War." He stood up, a frown creasing his forehead beneath the mask. "So that's how Ritchie and Ellis died."

The booming voice close to the Mask continued its harangue. Stumbling over the rough lava, Parker found a big amplifier resting on a rock near the framework statue that was supposed to represent Ameena. A heavy cable led from the amplifier, over the edge of the crater, down into the bottomless lake of molten lava.

"This cable must lead to Fingers Tashman's hideout," decided the Masked Detective. "That voice must be coming from there, which means there's some outlet from the hideout—inside the crater!"

He struck his thigh with his palm.

"Of course!" he cried. "I remember Mopy and Stud talking when they were taking me up here. One of them said something about using the other entrance and the other objected because they had no masks. There must be a doorway leading into the tunnel that comes out directly into the crater."

He paused and looked over the side of the volcanic rim. Gaseous smoke swirled up to greet him.

"But how am I going to get down to that door?" wondered the Mask. "The gang must have some kind of extension ladder that slides up here. If they do, it's down now."

He glanced at the amplifier. It was a heavy, bulky object. He moved swiftly to the loud speaker and hoisted the box, tugging at the cable connection. The cable held.

"This might do it," the Masked Detective decided. "It's *got* to do it!"

PARKER wedged the amplifier between two massive hunks of lava. The cable he lashed around a mound of fused lava, close to the lip of the crater. He hauled hard on the noose. The wire held.

Stripping off his coat, the Mask tied the garment around his face, covering his nose and mouth. He gripped the radio cable and backed toward the lip of the crater.

"Here's luck," he muttered hopefully. "I'll need it!"

Carefully he began to feel his way down the inside core of the volcano. It took all his great strength to keep his body almost at right angles to the side of the crater, his feet moving carefully down the hot rocks which lined the core.

Overpowering fumes of sulphurous gas rushed up around him. He held his breath. To be overcome by the crater's fumes now meant losing his grip on the cable. And that meant a swift, agonized death in the molten caldron of white-hot lava.

Inch by inch he lowered himself through the steaming vapors, down toward the gaseous mass which bubbled restlessly hundreds of feet below. The Mask's lungs protested against the nauseous inhalations he was forced to take, and his eyes streamed tears.

"I only hope," Parker told himself, "that this cable leads to some place big enough for a man to crawl into or stand on. I never could make the climb back up on this cable."

It seemed as though he had been lowering himself for hours before the cable began to veer in toward the wall of the crater. Then his dangling feet struck hot metal. He looked down, saw the top of an iron ladder which hugged the wall of the pit, leading to a small platform about fifteen feet lower.

"That's how Tashman's gang gets to the volcano rim," Parker decided. "That ladder must work on rollers. It wouldn't be such a tough climb with a gas mask and an asbestos suit."

The hot iron scorched his hands as he swung himself over to the ladder, but he forced himself to hang on. He went down, hand over hand, as quickly as possible. What he had expected proved true. The ladder continued some twenty feet below the platform. Larger rollers were visible on the ledge, making it possible to raise the ladder to the lip of the volcano.

The Mask danced an involuntary jig as he stood on the rock platform. The floor of the ledge was as hot as a branding iron. The soles of his feet were seared, even though the leather of his shoes had protected them to a certain extent.

He leaped toward the rear of the niche in the wall of the volcano. He saw that the radio amplifier's cable led into a crack in the lava. That crack, he knew, must mark the opening into Fingers Tashman's underground hideout. He pried at it with clutching fingers. The rock wall refused to budge.

The Mask stepped back, his eyes roaming around the niche. He eyed the radio cable, which suddenly gave him an idea. Grabbing the thick wire, he began sawing it against a sharp corner of the depression in the volcano side. His heart leaped as the insulation of the wire began to fray.

Parker worked furiously at his task, rubbing the cable against the edge of the rock until at last the insulation wore through. Several more pulls and the wire itself snapped. The Mask's long fingers stripped the insulation from the double stands of cable, then placed the two wires together. There was a brief flash and Parker dropped the cable, a satisfied smile on his face.

HE waited for what seemed an eternity, shifting his feet constantly on the hot stone that seemed to be growing still hotter. As the minutes passed, his heart fell again.

"Looks like the scheme's no good," he grunted in defeat.

Then the crack in the rock, through which the radio cable had disappeared, abruptly widened. The Mask saw the farther end of the niche swing inward, away from him. A man in a gas mask, clad in a heavy asbestos uniform, walked out onto the stone platform through the thick, swirling vapors.

Parker swarmed over the thug before he had a chance to look around. One short, chopping blow, which caught the other man in the back of the neck, and the thug slumped. Parker caught him as he fell and dragged him through the door into a dimly lighted corridor.

"I thought that if I shorted their radio, they'd send somebody along the line to see what had happened," muttered the Mask triumphantly. "And I was right."

CHAPTER XVI

An Unexpected Friend

UNHAPPILY Winnie Bligh had stood at the rail of the *San Marco,* watching as Rex Parker plowed through the water toward the shore. The green light flared high up on the mountain and the voice of Ameena roared down the volcano.

"I wish Rex had taken you with him, Jiminez," Winnie said finally. "I know he is fearless, but after all he is just one man against Fingers Tashman and his gang of killers."

"That is not the only danger, *senorita,*" said the little Mexican. "That voice from the mountain—the voice of Ameena—is telling the Indians to revolt, to destroy all of the white people on the boats out here."

"Then Rex is likely to be killed!" exclaimed Winnie. "He doesn't speak the language of the Indians, doesn't know that they are being turned against us. We've got to do something about this, Captain!"

"Si," agreed the captain. "But Rex has the Masked Detective to help him."

"Of course," said Winnie. "But can't we do something, too?"

Ever since the yacht had stopped at the island, Winnie Bligh had found her inactivity irksome. When the Masked Detective had battled criminals in the big cities, she had always been in the thick of the fray. There had been numerous times when she had been able to help Rex Parker a great deal.

At such times Detective-sergeant Dan Gleason of the New York Police Department also worked with them. The sergeant was the only other person in the world besides Winnie who knew that Rex Parker actually was the Masked Detective. But now Gleason was far away and he knew nothing of what was going on here on Moaxacelo, the Island of Death.

"Look!" cried Guerra. "Those three men, they have captured Baker. See? They are lifting him into their boat and now they return to the *Milrey* with their prisoner."

"Never mind that," said Winnie impatiently. "Rex said that Baker wasn't the killer. Can't we take your crew and go ashore? Perhaps we might be able to help Rex and the Masked Detective then."

"That is just what we shall do!" decided the captain.

Guerra barked commands to his six men. Eager for action, they swiftly lowered a boat, for the crew of the yacht were all picked men from the Mexican Coast Guard. One of them grumbled when he was left on board to guard the craft.

Guerra and the girl climbed into the tender with the rest of the crew. All of the men had been heavily armed and they were ready for trouble.

When they were halfway to shore, Guerra glanced back at the yacht. He gave a startled exclamation as he saw a streak of white shooting across the dark harbor straight at the moored *San Marco*. He watched it with a fascinated stare. The white streak neared the sleek yacht, then rocketed directly into the side.

There was a terrific explosion. The *San Marco* bounded into the air and crashed down into the water, a jagged hole in her side.

"Por Dios!" breathed Guerra. "A torpedo!"

"The submarine pirates!" shrilled Winnie. "Oh, Jiminez, they've torpedoed your beautiful yacht!"

"And she sinks," said Guerra bitterly. "As I have said, a policeman and a coast guard officer's lot is not a happy one."

Relief swept over them when they saw the man they had left guarding the yacht dive over the side. At least he had not been killed by the explosion. But the torpedo had struck just below the waterline and the yacht was sinking fast.

LIKE a giant fish coming up for air, the sub rose to the surface of the harbor and edged closer to the *Milrey*.

"To the shore quickly!" shouted Captain Guerra. "We must reach the island before they come after us. They are boarding the ketch, taking those men their prisoners, no doubt. We may be next. Hurry!"

The motor roared as the boat tore through the breakers. The crew leaped out and dragged it up on the sand the instant it grated against the shore of the harbor. Guerra and Winnie leaped onto the dry sand, then raced across the beach.

"Head for the jungle," panted the little Mexican, "but be careful. Hear the drums? The Indians of the island prepare for war against us."

They ran on, forcing their way through the brush, heading back toward the mountain, for they knew that Rex Parker must have gone in that direction. Time passed as they beat their way farther and farther into the jungle. Soon they were climbing up the side of the volcano.

Winnie was thankful that she still wore her slacks and jersey. The events of the night had come too swiftly for her even to think of changing when she had gone to her cabin on the yacht. Now these clothes she wore were all she had. Everything she had brought to wear to the island had gone down with the *San Marco*.

"Listen!" Captain Guerra suddenly paused and held up his hand for silence. "You hear?"

The others halted and stood straining their ears. On both sides they could hear faint crashing in the brush and voices shouting a weird chant.

The Indians were coming, aroused to fever-pitch to murder all the white people on the island. High above them, at the top of the volcano, the booming voice of Ameena urged them on, filling the warriors of the usually peaceful tribe with the lust to kill.

Winnie and Guerra had no way of knowing that, at this moment, Rex Parker was slowly climbing down the cable inside the crater. They only knew that their danger was growing more imminent with every crackling sound that came from the brush.

"Shoot to kill when they get near enough," Guerra told the five men. "There is nothing else we can do."

"Yes, there is," said Winnie. "We can keep on climbing. Don't you remember all those rough places we discovered today when we explored the volcano? You and your men should be able to defend us much better from up there than down here in the jungle."

"Of course!" blurted the captain. "You are right, *senorita*. I have been stupid. The top of the mountain is of course the place for us to be."

They hastily continued their climb, working on up the slope, but they had wasted too much time. The Indians were close on their heels. An arrow whistled through the air. One of Guerra's men cried out in agony as the pointed barb tore into his back. He was dead when he hit the ground. The arrow had pierced his heart.

Guerra's gun roared in his hand as shadowy, copper-skinned figures loomed below the group from the *San Marco*. The four members of the crew were blasting away with the rifles they had brought with them.

The fusillade drove the Indians back and sent them hurriedly ducking for cover. They had not expected such resistance, for never before had white men fired at them. They had expected to kill these people without any real danger to themselves.

"Come on!" shouted Guerra. "We have driven them back. Keep climbing!"

WINNIE grew conscious of a vast silence. At first it puzzled her, until she realized what it was that had made the change. The great voice of Ameena was no longer roaring down from the mountain top. It had suddenly died away during the noisy battle.

All about them great chunks of lava were weird shapes in the shadows. The five men and the girl had to climb slowly and carefully, for there were treacherous places that might cause a dangerous fall.

"There is also another danger we must consider," gasped Guerra, pausing for breath. "It might be that this Fingers Tashman has some of his killers stationed at the top of the mountain. Remember, the entrance to their hideout was once somewhere around here."

"And Rex Parker may be up here, too," added Winnie. "I wonder where he is."

"I don't know, *senorita,*" said the captain, "but I think I had better go take a look around and see if I can find him."

"I'll go with you." Winnie's tone was anxious. "Your men can hold off the Indians for the time being, I hope."

Captain Guerra started to protest and then changed his mind. With Winnie beside him, he cautiously ascended to the top of the mountain. They moved as silently as possible, realizing that at any moment they might encounter some of Fingers Tashman's gang, who had doubtlessly heard the roaring of the rifles down below and would come to investigate.

"Look out!" yelled Guerra suddenly. He flung himself against the girl to protect her with his body as a figure came hurtling toward them from the deep shadows. "It is—"

The captain raised his gun. Before he could fire, something struck him a heavy blow on the head and he dropped to the ground, unconscious. Winnie screamed as she glimpsed a sinister-looking yellow face close to her own and caught sight of a silver gleam that she instantly knew was a knife. Her foot slipped as she leaped back. She lost her balance. Her head struck the hard ground and everything went black.

She opened her eyes to find herself in what was evidently a room somewhere in Fingers Tashman's secret hideout. The place was elaborately furnished with Chinese screens and in one corner was a trap-door leading to some place farther underground.

To Winnie's surprise, she was lying on a couch at the end of the room and she had not been bound or gagged. There was no sign of Captain Guerra. She appeared to be alone. Then she raised her head and glanced at the floor near one of the screens.

"Rex!" she exclaimed in horror. She sat up on the side of the couch and stared at the motionless form on the floor. "He's dead!"

"Not dead, but prisoner," said a soft voice behind her.

Winnie whirled in the direction of the voice, saw an evil-faced Chinese gazing at her with glittering eyes. The Oriental was dressed in native costume, but he was completely bald.

"Who are you?" Winnie demanded tensely.

"Servant of honorable Fingers Tashman," answered the Chinese. "Also good man with throw knife. Boss say so many times. He be pleased when I tell him I capture pretty lady." The servant smiled wickedly. "Ah Ling is good man. You stay here while I'll go tell boss he got visitor."

AH LING went to the trap-door and started clambering down a ladder. Just as he did so, Howard Desmond's blond head suddenly appeared from behind one of the Chinese screens. He sprang out. There was an automatic in his right hand, his white shirt was torn and he looked as though he had been fighting desperately. He had been binding up a cut in his arms with a strip from his shirt.

"It's all right, Miss Bligh," he said. "You and Parker are safe now. I don't think we'll have any trouble—"

Desmond stopped talking abruptly as a knife whistled by his head and thudded into the wood of the screen behind him. The Chinese threw another glittering blade, but Desmond leaped away and it clattered harmlessly to the floor.

Winnie reached down, grabbed up the knife and frenziedly began cutting the ropes that bound the unconscious Rex Parker. Desmond's gun roared at someone he apparently saw lurking in the half-open doorway across the room.

Ah Ling had a third knife ready to throw. In Chinese Desmond snapped what sounded like a threat. The servant abruptly lowered the weapon and quickly disappeared through the trap-door. Desmond leaped toward the opening in the floor.

"Stay here!" he ordered. "I've got to stop that Chinese before he gets to Tashman."

He disappeared down the ladder before Winnie had a chance to protest, or even to question him. She quickly pulled the tape off Rex Parker's mouth and he sat up, dazedly feeling his sticky, painful lips.

"Winnie!" he groaned. "I was fooling around outside, got one of Tashman's men. But when I dragged him into the corridor, the Chinese servant knocked me out. Fortunately I had taken off my mask, so they don't know that I'm the Masked Detective. Where is Guerra?"

"I don't know." Winnie shook her head. "He was with me, but they must have taken him away somewhere."

She hurriedly related what had happened until the time she had been knocked unconscious by her fall. Parker listened intently, then led the way out through the door. The hideout had grown strangely silent.

"You try to find the captain and his men, Winnie," suggested Parker as he drew the mask from his secret pocket and adjusted it across his face. "I'm going to round up this gang here. I have a way of doing it as soon as I can get back in the passageway."

They presently found a door that opened out into the shadows on the top of the mountain. Winnie realized that the Masked Detective felt she would be safer outside with Guerra and his men than she would be remaining inside the hideout, so she did not protest.

In a moment she was hurrying through the darkness toward the spot where she had last seen the captain. The Masked Detective had already disappeared on his perilous mission.

CHAPTER XVII

The Curse of Dead Men's Gold

GRUMBLING, Fingers Tashman sat at the desk in the office of his hideaway, grimly staring at the four men who lay bound and gagged on the floor beside him. The leader of the submarine pirates puffed on a cigarette and looked annoyed.

"You guys have caused me a lot of grief," he told the four men on the floor. "I made a nice, permanent place here for the boys and me. I mind my own business and do my stuff without bothering anybody. We use the sub for smuggling as well as raiding. I guess we clear about half a million dollars' worth of junk a month through this station. Yeah, you been a lot of grief to me, and this guy Desmond is the worst of all."

Tashman glared at the blond man, who was now lying bound and gagged with the other three men from the *Milrey*.

"That Chinese servant of mine catches this guy Parker and the girl —and you have to spoil it by playing hero, you lug—following the Chinese down through the trap-door and then puttin' a bullet in him. I didn't like that. No, I didn't like it at all, so some of my boys are gonna teach you it ain't nice to play with guns like that."

He scowled as he discovered a spot of dirt on his expensive white linen coat. Carefully he brushed it off. Then he glowered again at his four prisoners.

"So what happens?" he went on. "You guys come nosing around here, looking for some two-bit treasure. That kind of stuff is just chicken feed to me, see? But you guys park around the island and start to make trouble. Now we got the natives down on our necks and we've got that guy Parker and the Mexican Coast Guard nosing around."

Tashman punched out his cigarette on the top of the desk. He seemed to be enjoying his monologue.

"That ain't enough, though. No—you birds have to go bumping off each other, and then this lug they call the Masked Detective shows up. If this don't stop, I'm going back and hang around Times Square, where a guy can be alone." Fingers Tashman frowned. "But now there ain't nothin' to do but rub you out. You guys don't know how I hate to kill people."

A buzzer sounded. Tashman turned

to step on a button, which released a sliding panel. A lean, freckled face appeared in the opening in the door. Behind the man peering in was a figure in a gas-mask and an asbestos suit. Tashman pressed another button, which opened the door.

"Tommy just got back from fixin' the radio," explained the freckle-faced man. "Accordin' to the signs he's been makin', he wants to talk to you, Chief."

"Okay," said Tashman. "Beat it, Spike."

The freckled thug turned and left the room, closing the door behind him. The man in the gas-mask approached the desk.

"What is it, Tommy?" Fingers asked. "What's the matter with—"

It was as far as he got. The man in the gas-mask cleared the desk in a swift dive. The edge of one hand clipped Tashman across the throat. The other fist smashed into the smuggler's face with a dull, meaty *thud*. Fingers went over backward and lay still.

The Mask stripped off the asbestos suit and the gas-mask. Quickly he searched Tashman's pockets and came up with an automatic. Reversing the gun in his hand, he scientifically tapped the leader of the raiders between the eyes with the butt.

"That will keep you quiet for some time," he muttered.

HIS eyes darted around the room, lighted on a huge radio transmitter set in one side of Tashman's office. The Mask leaped for the instrument, examined it swiftly and threw a switch. He bent over the key of the instrument, adjusting earphones to his head.

For a moment the room was filled with the chatter of the radio, flashing out the call known throughout the world. SOS! SOS! SOS! Then came the whining dots and dashes of a reply.

"All Mexican naval, coastguard ships proceed to Moaxacelo," radioed the Mask. He gave the island's latitude and longitude. "Gravest urgency. All available ships and planes needed at once!"

He signed Guerra's name to the message. The reply flashed through immediately.

The Mask snapped off the transmitter and raced across the room to the four men who lay bound on the floor. He snatched a sharp-edged steel knife from the desk and quickly slashed their bonds. Cole, Woodley, Desmond and Baker arose, rubbing their ankles.

"This is sure funny," growled Baker. "The guy I tried to knock out when we were on the beach shows up and gets us out of a tough spot."

"I'm mighty glad that the Masked Detective is around," said Cole. He glared at Baker. "By the way, this man is really 'Coconut' Humphries, a former rum-runner. He was our prisoner."

"Why?" asked the Mask.

"Because your friend, Rex Parker, claims that Baker, or Humphries, is the murderer of Ritchie and Ellis," stated Desmond before Cole could answer.

"I'll consider that angle later," said the Mask. "Meanwhile, how did you four happen to be taken prisoners by Tashman?"

"Baker got away from the yacht tonight," replied Cole. "We were on our boat, after capturing him, when suddenly a sub emerged right beside the *Milrey*. They torpedoed the *San Marco* first—"

"The *San Marco!*" exclaimed the Mask with mock horror in his voice, for Winnie had told him what had happened. "With everybody on board?"

"No. Guerra, Miss Bligh and the crew had just started for shore in the small boat. We saw Parker swim into the beach a little before that."

"Did the *San Marco* sink?" asked the Mask.

"She went to the bottom in a hurry," answered Desmond. "But as Cole just said, a bunch of thugs boarded our boat from the sub. They overpowered us and forced us into the submarine. They also took the treasure with them."

"I see. And then they brought you here?"

"Yes," replied Cole. "Tashman was going to kill us when he got around to it."

"Nice fellow," said the Mask.

He looked around, then bent to pick up the ropes that had bound the four men. He used these to tie up Fingers Tashman. A few minutes later the four men left the office, the Mask behind them with his gun in his hand.

Beyond the door was a long corridor. The passageway had been hewn out of the soft rock of the volcano mountain and it wound along for several hundred feet. No one challenged them as they walked along it. At length they came to an opening in the rock wall. Beyond the opening lay a platform and swirling past this was a rushing dark river.

"Here's where we got off the submarine," Cole said. He leaned out to peer over the edge of the platform. "There's nothing ahead but pitch darkness. I'm sure we can never make it."

THE Mask looked carefully at the swirling water and then turned back to the other men.

"Anybody here who can't swim?" he asked.

"I—I can just about keep afloat," faltered Desmond, grinning nervously, "but the rest of you go ahead. Send back help if you can. If you can't good luck."

"Better not risk it then, Desmond," advised the Mask. "That water looks dangerous." He glanced at the other men. "What about the rest of you? Do you want to try it?"

"Of course," snapped Cole impatiently, and even Arthur Woodley nodded. "Come on. We'll try to pick up Desmond later."

Abruptly the Mask gave Desmond a quick shove that sent the blond young man off the platform and down into the black water of the river. He came up in a moment and struck out with a powerful overhand crawl stroke.

"He keeps afloat quite well," pointed out the Mask with an ironical note in his voice. "All right, men, let's go."

Parker dived in after the other three had jumped into the water. They had made no attempt to remove their clothing, which hindered their swimming to a certain extent.

"I—I can't make it!" gasped Desmond as the Masked Detective reached him. He floundered around and went under, then came to the surface again. "Help!"

The Mask drew up beside Desmond. He kept a supporting hand under the young man's shoulders as they were whirled into the darkness beyond the landing. It was a nightmare journey, with Desmond threatening to pull the Masked Detective under time and again with his struggles. The two men were buffeted from wall to wall of the underground chasm.

Finally, after the young man had threatened to drown both of them with a desperate grip on Parker's throat, the Mask drew back his fist and smashed it into Desmond's face. The young man kicked convulsively and lay still. After that the going was easier for the Masked Detective.

The current of the underground river slackened. After what seemed hours, a glimmer of the moonlit night showed ahead. Parker saw that Cole, Woodley and Baker had managed to stay afloat. Dragging Desmond along, the Mask struck out for the exit from the underground channel.

As he and Desmond shot out into the open, Parker looked around. He saw the dripping heads of Cole, Woodley and Baker nearby. He was relieved to find that the dive had not ripped the black mask from his face. As far as these men were concerned, the Masked Detective's identity was still unknown.

The three men from the ketch made their way to the bank of what appeared to be a quiet pool. They helped Parker drag Desmond's body up onto dry land.

The Mask recognized the place as soon as he looked around. It was the pool to which he had followed the mysterious prowler the night he had been captured by Tashman's men—the night Ellis had been burned to death.

"So that is the main entrance to Tashman's hideaway," the Mask mused aloud, "an underground river big enough to let him run his submarine right up into the center of the mountain. What a smugglers' paradise that is!"

HOWARD DESMOND moaned and sat up. For an instant he looked around him dazedly.

"What happened?" he asked. "Where am I?"

"You're safe," said the Masked Detective. "I brought you through the river, even though you did try to drown me."

"Drown you?" exclaimed Desmond. "What do you mean?"

"Never mind that!" growled Baker before the Masked Detective could answer. The moonlight gleamed on a gun that had suddenly appeared in the stocky man's hand. "Put up your hands, all of you!"

"What's the idea, Baker?" demanded the Mask. "Why the gun? Didn't I just save you from Tashman's men when he was going to have you all killed?"

"Yeah," snarled Coconut Humphries, alias Jim Baker. "You saved me, all right—saved me so you could turn me over to the police, charged with a couple of murders. Well, I'm not having any."

"What are you going to do about it, Jim Baker?" asked the Mask.

"Simple. I just bump off you four lugs and that's that. When my old pal, Four Fingers Tashman, learns what I've done for him, maybe he'll give me a nice red apple for being a good boy. See?"

"But Fingers was holding you a prisoner along with the rest," said the Mask. "You fool, don't you realize that if he had been your friend, he would have released you?"

"Aw, he was just makin' it look good for these other lugs," grunted Baker. "He was gonna let me go when he got around to it. I'm bettin' on that."

"Did he tell you so?" insinuated the Mask.

Baker hesitated. In the silence that lingered over the group at the pool, the sound of gunfire coming from the side of the mountain could be clearly heard. The Mask grew tense as he listened to it.

He knew that a torpedo had destroyed the *San Marco* and that Winnie, the captain and crew of the yacht were somewhere on the island. Were they the ones who had fired those shots? Were they somewhere up the side of the volcano, battling the submarine pirates, or were they fighting the Indians? The Mask did not know, but he was desperately anxious to find out.

"Don't be a fool," said the Mask when Baker did not speak. "You're just guessing about Fingers Tashman. You don't know if he is your friend or not, Baker."

"It don't matter," snarled the thickset man. "I know you guys ain't, so now I'll wipe you out, all of you."

"Oh, no you won't!"

Desmond hurled himself at Baker and caught him around the legs in a flying tackle. The gun in Baker's hand roared, but the bullet plowed harmlessly into the ground as the stocky man went down. Cole snatched up the gun the second Baker dropped it. The thick-set man managed to shake

Desmond off and get to his feet, but the gun blazed as he leaped toward George Cole. Blood curtained Baker's face, spouting from the hole in his brain. He staggered, sprawled lifelessly on the ground.

"DID you have to kill him, Cole?" snapped Desmond. "Now we won't be able to prove that he was the murderer!"

"He—he threatened to kill all of us," stammered the elderly millionaire. "When I saw him coming at me I—I pulled the trigger." He shuddered and dropped the gun. "I never killed anyone before. I feel ill."

"That leaves only three of us!" Arthur Woodley laughed wildly. "Three of us to share a treasure we haven't even got any more. A treasure that Tashman and his gang took away. We haven't got it and still we're dying!"

"That's right, Woodley," said the Mask coldly, his hand on the butt of the gun that he wore in a shoulder holster. The eyes that peered through the mask were watching the three men warily. "The treasure has brought death again, the curse that always seems to linger over dead men's gold. Perhaps the old Spanish pirates knew that. Maybe that was why they left it here."

"It's true!" exclaimed Desmond wildly. "I've had enough. I don't want any part of the treasure. I just want to get away from this island, to be able to close my eyes without being afraid of being murdered in my sleep. I'm going to get away!"

Before the others realized his intention, Desmond turned and ran, tearing through the brush of the jungle as though the avenging hounds of heaven were at his heels. The Mask cursed softly under his breath and snatched out his gun. He aimed at Desmond's legs, hoping to stop him without killing him. Before he could fire, the blond-haired man had vanished into the shadows.

"After him!" shouted Cole. "It's a trick. He's not frightened. It's all a bluff. He's going back to try to get the treasure from Tashman's hideout. Come on, Woodley, we won't let him get away with it!"

He raced off in the direction that Desmond had taken. Arthur Woodley trotted after him like a fox terrier following a mastiff. The Masked Detective remained where he was.

"I wonder if they were all lying," he said softly. "I don't believe that George Bliss Cole really feels the treasure is that important. But if one of those three is the real murderer, then he picked a good way to escape." The Mask smiled grimly. "Which was just what I wanted him to do, for the time being. When it comes to the final roundup, I'd like to get this gang of killers all at once."

He listened carefully. Again he heard the faint sounds of shots, coming from somewhere on the side of the mountain. In the brush to his left, he heard a wild cry of pain, then the sound of someone running through the jungle. The crashing in the undergrowth grew louder. Parker realized that the fugitive was heading in the direction of the pool.

A MOMENT later Arthur Woodley burst out of the brush. The little rabbit-like man was staggering, but he managed to run forward as he saw the Mask standing there.

"The Indians!" he panted. "They're all over the island, killing every white man they see—you've got to do—something. A wounded man just—came down off mountain—said girl and crew of the *San Marco*—up there—trying to fight off Indians."

"All right," said the Mask. "Get a grip on yourself, Woodley. You're not even hurt."

"That's what—you think," gasped the little secretary. "Always wanted—to be rich—to find a treasure—and now it's too—late."

The meek little man who had craved

wealth and adventure pitched forward on his face and sprawled motionless on the ground. The Mask's eyes widened in horror as he saw the shaft of the arrow that projected from Arthur Woodley's back.

The curse of the pirate treasure had struck again. The Island of Death had claimed another victim.

CHAPTER XVIII

Killer Roundup

CROUCHING behind a big boulder high up on the side of the mountain in the center of the island of Moaxacelo, Winnie Bligh ducked down instinctively as an arrow whistled above her head. From another boulder off to her left came the whiplike *crack* of a rifle as one of the yacht's crew fired.

She was thankful that the weird green light was no longer painting the top of the volcano with its ghastly glow and that the great, booming voice of Ameena, god of the mountain, had ceased. She wondered if Captain Jiminez Guerra had succeeded or failed in his mission. He had volunteered to circle around and get the man above who was firing down at them.

Not until the little party from the *San Marco* had climbed close to the top of the volcano had they realized that their move had not been the success they had expected. Before they could reach the top, they had been forced to halt by the rifle fire of someone stationed up above. Winnie and the men with her were trapped, for the Indians were advancing on them from below. They had sought the shelter of the scattered boulders and now were waging a grim fight to the finish.

It seemed to Winnie that the little Mexican had been gone for hours, but she decided it had really been only ten or fifteen minutes since he had disappeared into the darkness. She held her little automatic ready in her hand, but as yet she had not fired a shot. She felt that it was useless to waste what few cartridges there were in the gun shooting at shadows.

The Indians below were little more than that. These Carib savages possessed all the stealth of the redmen of other tribes. They had trained themselves to move silently and blend with the shadows while stalking their foes.

"Senorita!" called one of Guerra's crew. "The *capitan,* he has not returned?"

"Not yet," answered Winnie. "I'm getting worried about him."

She glanced over her shoulder as a figure shadowed the rock in front of her. Before she could cry out, or even move, a copper-hued native grabbed her and clapped a hand over her mouth to cut off any outcry. She struggled wildly, but it was useless, for a second Indian had joined the first.

Swiftly and silently they bound her arms and legs with ropes made of tough vines. Then they lifted her and carried her away, one holding her by the shoulders and the other by the feet. A gag of leaves had been stuffed into her mouth, nearly choking her. She managed to work it out when they had traveled some little distance.

"Help!" she screamed. "The Indians have got me!"

She heard loud Spanish curses from the men of the crew, stationed in the rocks above, but they did not dare fire for fear of hitting her. The Indians who carried her were hurrying surefootedly down the mountain. Another pair joined the first two. One of these gagged her with a strip of cloth just as she screamed again.

To Winnie, the journey through the night became part of a strange and ghastly dream. She had a fleeting impression of the brush and trees, looming all about her, of glimpses of the deep blue sky. Then the brush gave way to space. They carried her so that it was difficult for her to turn her head to either side. She was sure that now she must be on the beach.

Suddenly her captors paused and hastily placed her down on sand. Again the green light was glaring from the mountain top.

WINNIE could look up toward the towering peak from where she was lying on the sand. She saw a giant figure revealed in the green glow. Once more the voice of Ameena roared down from the top of the volcano.

"Stop!" it boomed in the language of the Carib Indians. "It is Ameena that commands it. A little while ago I bade my people to rise and destroy the white men and women on the island, but it was not my real wish."

"Strange are the ways of the gods," muttered one of the Indians who stood by the girl. "First Ameena tells us that we must rise and kill, and now he says stop."

"Listen!" ordered another Indian tensely.

"Hear ye, my people," continued the roaring voice from above. "The great figure that speaks to you from high on the top of the volcano is but a mockery of the real Ameena. A huge doll made of sticks and rags has been put there by the man in white to fool my people so that you will do his wicked bidding."

From all over the island came wild yells and angry roars as the Indians heard what the voice of their god was saying.

"It is the white man who makes the green light that glows from the mountain top," said the booming voice. "Know ye not that the real Ameena speaks to you in the rumble of thunder and with the forked tongue of lightning? Does he not whisper to you in the patter of the rain?"

"Prove that the words of wisdom you speak are true, O Ameena!" chanted the Indians from all over the island. "If the image that we believed was you is false, then destroy it by your mighty hand."

For a moment the voice grew silent. The Indians stood staring up at the great figure of Ameena towering high above them. Then flames suddenly licked at the robe of the figure. Swift, consuming fire blazed and burned until the huge image became a mass of crumbling cinders. At the same time the green flare faded and died.

"Ameena has done as my people ask," boomed the great voice. "The false god has been destroyed. Let there be peace on Moaxacelo, my children. Return to the village of your tribe. Release the white people you have taken prisoner. Know ye not that the wicked among these will destroy each other?"

"It is true," said one of the Indians somberly. "Ameena has uttered words of wisdom. Have we not seen the way these white men kill each other because of the lust for gold, which to us is no more than pebbles on the beach? We fight no longer!"

He reached down and unfastened the rope vines that bound the girl's hands and feet, then helped Winnie to her feet. In sign language he motioned her to go, that she was free.

"But I don't understand!" exclaimed Winnie. "Why did you take me prisoner and are now letting me go free?"

"Ameena," said the Indian reverently, gathering what she meant by the puzzled look on her face.

Winnie realized that the great voice from the mountain top had made these savages change their minds, but she did not know what Ameena had said, or why the booming words had meant so much to the Indians. She has seen the giant figure above burning, had been startled and amazed, but she had sensed that the huge image was not actually alive.

" I wonder if Rex and Guerra could have arranged all that," she mused as she hurried along the beach. "I wish I could find them, but I don't know where to look."

SHE left the Indians behind her and headed north toward the jungle. Though she dreaded attempting the long climb up the mountain, she felt there was nothing else for her to do but attempt it, if she hoped to find Rex Parker and the little captain of the Mexican Coast Guard.

Indians passed her, coming out of the brush. They made no attempt to come near her. It was apparent that the savages were no longer interested in the white people who roamed the island. They continued heading back to their camp on the beach and Winnie found herself alone near the edge of the jungle.

"Miss Bligh!"

Howard Desmond stepped out of the brush and came toward her. His clothing was torn and soggy from his trip through the underground river, but his blond hair was neatly in place and there was a smile on his lean, handsome face.

"Howard Desmond!" Winnie exclaimed, relieved to see a familiar face. "What are you doing here?"

"Hiding from the Indians until I discovered it was safe," admitted Desmond, "if I must be truthful about it. But what's happened to you?"

Winnie told him all that had happened since the *San Marco* had been torpedoed. Desmond listened with interest.

"Sorry," he said when she finished, "but I haven't seen Parker or Guerra anywhere around. It was the Masked Detective who rescued us when Tashman took us prisoners."

"The Masked Detective?" cried Winnie. "Then he—"

"Then he what?" asked Desmond.

"Then he's really on the island," said Winnie quickly. "I wasn't sure of that."

"Yes, he's here all right," Desmond nodded. "And I'm not particularly pleased about it." His tone grew hard. "You see, Miss Bligh, I don't like people who interfere with my plans."

"Your plans?" Winnie gazed at him anxiously, sensing a sinister undercurrent in his tone. "What do you mean?"

"Just what I said. I don't like people who interfere with my plans."

He turned toward the jungle at the sound of crashing in the brush. A gun leaped to his hand. Winnie stood watching breathlessly as a man in a white linen suit stepped out of the jungle and walked along the beach toward them.

"That's Fingers Tashman!" whispered Winnie excitedly.

"So it is." Desmond dropped his gun back into his pocket. "Hi, Fingers! Everything set?"

"Yeah, kid." Tashman nodded. "Everything's set. We're all loaded up and ready to go." Fingers glanced at Winnie. "What are you going to do with the dame—take her along?"

"I hadn't thought of it until now," said Desmond, "but it's an idea."

A COLD chill crept over Winnie as she realized that Fingers Tashman was treating Howard Desmond as a friend and equal. Obviously the two men had been working together, since they talked calmly of taking her with them. Take her where? And what had they meant when they said that everything was all set?

"What happened up at the hideout?" asked Desmond bitterly. "Who was doing that voice of Ameena stuff? Whoever it was certainly put on a good show for the Indians. They're not a bit of use to us any longer."

"That must have been the Masked Detective," said Tashman. "That guy pulled a fast one on me tonight. He shorts the wires on the loudspeaker. Then, when Bill goes out to see what's wrong, the Mask conks him over the head."

"Then what happened?" demanded

Desmond as the leader of the submarine pirates paused.

"The Mask comes in and knocks me out." Tashman scowled. "But what am I telling you for? You was there and seen the whole thing."

"That isn't what I want to know," said Desmond. "I tried to drown the Mask in the river when he rescued us, but he was too smart and knocked me out. How did you get free, though?"

"Spike showed up just about the time I come to and untied me." Fingers Tashman leered at the girl. "Don't worry about us giving you an earful. You ain't never going to get a chance to tell nobody about it."

"I'm afraid that's true, Miss Bligh," added Desmond. "You see, we really can't take any chances. We did our best to prevent you and Rex Parker from coming to the island in the first place."

"Yeah," said Tashman. "I took a shot at that Parker guy that stormy day in Poljos. Sloppy shooting it was, too. I guess I was worrying too much about the rain ruining my clothes."

"I'm a little tired of this what-the-well-dressed-gangster-will-wear act of yours, Fingers," stated Desmond impatiently.

"Wait a minute!" Tashman snapped. "Don't go gettin' any big ideas, see? I take orders from you as long as it suits me—and that's all."

"And that had better be all the time," warned Desmond.

Abruptly Winnie turned and ran. She had heard more than enough to know that her life was in danger as long as she remained in the vicinity of these two men.

"The girl!" shouted Desmond. "After her, she's getting away!"

"She ain't going far." Fingers Tashman drew his gun and aimed deliberately at the fleeting figure that was dashing down the beach. "That dame knows too much for us to let her go."

His automatic roared and Winnie dropped to the sand in a crumpled heap.

"You fool!" snarled Desmond. "You've killed her. You didn't have to do that. I wanted to take her with us."

"Aw, quit beefin'," said Fingers Tashman as he dropped his gun back into his pocket. "Good thing I happened to have an extra rod around after the Mask frisked me."

"You didn't have to kill her," repeated Desmond savagely.

"Quit beefin'," rasped Tashman. "You know that dead dames can't talk. It's better that way. You ready to go?"

"In a moment," said Desmond, heading toward the jungle. "I left some stuff hidden back here in the brush."

"Could this be what you're looking for, Desmond?" asked George Cole.

The elderly man stepped out of the brush with a long hose in his

[*Turn page*]

Best Mystery Thrillers in Every Issue of

Featured in the November Issue

MAKE MINE DEATH

A Baffling Mystery Novelet

By **FENTON W. EARNSHAW**

AND MANY OTHER STORIES

THRILLING DETECTIVE

EVERY MONTH **10c** EVERYWHERE

hands and a tank strapped to his back.

"Cole!" exclaimed the blond man, shrinking back in sudden horror. "Good Lord, don't turn that thing on me!"

Green flame suddenly shot from the muzzle of the hose. Desmond screamed in pain and terror as the searing fire caught him. From the brush a gun roared. Cole dropped to the ground, a bullet in his leg.

Desmond ran wildly down the beach and plunged into the surf, where the water quickly extinguished his blazing clothing.

"Hand's up, Tashman!" barked the Mask.

He stepped out onto the beach with his automatic in his hand. He looked down at Cole. The elderly man had shut off the flame-thrower and was lying on the sand, writhing in pain, holding his wounded leg.

"He's the guy who burned them two lugs from the museum expedition to death," said Fingers Tashman, nodding toward Cole. "That bunch sure plays nasty. When me and my boys wipe out a guy, we do it clean. No burning stuff for us."

"Except for tossing them into the boiling lava in the volcano," said the Mask grimly.

Rex Parker's heart sank as he saw the still figure of Winnie Bligh lying farther along the beach. He had arrived at the edge of the jungle after Tashman had fired at the girl, so he had not known what had happened to her.

Slowly the Mask backed toward the girl, his gun still covering Tashman. Desmond came staggering out of the surf like the old man of the sea.

Crashing through the brush, Captain Guerra and his men appeared, marching ten men ahead of them at rifle points.

"I'm all right, Rex," said Winnie softly as the Masked Detective knelt beside her. "I dropped just before Tashman fired. I wanted them to think his bullet had killed me."

"Oh!" Parker breathed a sigh of relief. "Don't give me a shock like that again, or I'm liable to drop dead."

"Look, *Senor* Mask," said Captain Guerra proudly. "Me and my men, we have captured the whole crew of the submarine. The pirates, they are no more." The little Mexican smiled. "Maybe after all there are times when the life of a captain of the coast guard is a happy one."

"I'm not the murderer," protested George Cole. "I found this flame-thrower back in the brush where Desmond had hidden it. I wanted to kill him the way he killed Ritchie and Ellis. I wanted to make him suffer as they must have suffered."

"I know." The Mask nodded. "Desmond is the real killer. I have been quite sure of that ever since I discovered that he rolls his cigarettes. He left one of them near the pool the night he followed Ellis there and killed him."

"I was afraid of that," groaned Fingers Tashman. "That's what comes of working with amateurs."

CHAPTER XIX

End of a Vacation

ON Moaxacelo a new day had dawned, but now the island looked as though the fleet maneuvers were being held there. A United States cruiser and a Mexican gunboat were moored offshore, and Mexican Coast Guard vessels were moving about busily.

Sometime during the night, the Mask had quietly disappeared from the island. But he had left notes with Rex Parker, so the reporter from the New York *Comet* could give a full report on all that had happened.

Howard Desmond had broken under pressure and confessed everything. The authorities had the murderer under arrest, in addition to Fingers Tashman and the rest of the submarine pirates.

"Now tell us all about it in your own way, Rex," ordered Winnie when she finally found herself alone with Parker and Captain Guerra back in Poljos. "What did Desmond say in his confession?"

"This is the story he tells," said Parker. "He and Fingers Tashman got together about three years ago. Desmond had the money, Tashman had the connections and knew about Moaxacelo's natural hideaway. The two of them formed a partnership in the fine old game of smuggling. Dope was their chief cargo, although Fingers was not adverse to running a few guns once in awhile."

"And then they got the idea of being pirates and trying to loot passenger ships like the *St. Lawrence?*" asked Guerra. "That was a mistake."

"It was," agreed Parker. "But, anyway, Tashman used Desmond's money to improve the natural make-up of that underground hideaway, to cut the tunnels through and arrange the three entrances—stuff like that. Desmond put up the cash for the submarine, too. Fingers bought it from one of the South American republics. Washington is investigating that. The gang might have gone along all right with their smuggling, but Desmond sent Tashman orders to raid the *St. Lawrence.*"

"Why?" asked Winnie as Parker paused. "Wasn't Desmond satisfied with the money he was getting from his share of the smuggling and dope-running?"

"Not after he learned about the treasure. It seems that the men who made up the museum expedition got the idea that there were millions in Spanish gold to be found on the island. That is, five of the six men did. Poor Ellis didn't know what it was all about. He was there as the actual archeologist from the museum and just thought they were looking for Indian relics."

"Then why was he murdered?" queried Winnie.

"Because he was missing from the

Read Our Companion Detective Magazines

Featuring America's Favorite Mystery Writers

DETECTIVE NOVELS MAGAZINE
THRILLING DETECTIVE
THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE
EXCITING DETECTIVE
POPULAR DETECTIVE
BLACK BOOK DETECTIVE
G-MEN DETECTIVE

NOW ON SALE AT ALL STANDS

camp on the beach that first night, when Desmond killed Ritchie with the flame-thrower. It seems Desmond suspected that Ellis knew he was the murderer and was waiting for the right moment to accuse him of the crime. The night I went ashore, disguised as an Indian, I followed a man who came in from the *Milrey*. It was Ellis. But Desmond followed and sent Tashman's men to capture me. They did, as you know."

"Si," said Captain Guerra. "But this Ellis and Ritchie, they are both killed because they learn too much about the smugglers' being on the island."

PARKER nodded. "I examined Ellis' shoes on the ketch and discovered that they apparently had not been worn for hours. That seemed to indicate that Ellis was the man I had seen swim ashore, who of course was barefooted. Not only that, but Desmond was the only man of the six who rolled his own cigarettes. He had carelessly left signs of that at the places where we found the bodies of the dead men."

"But how did this business about the treasure start?" demanded Winnie.

"The which, why and when girl!" Parker smiled at her. "Well, Jim Baker—or Coconut Humphries—showed up in Baltimore with a map that he had got hold of during prohibition days and done nothing about. He was broke, but he met George Cole and sold him the idea of getting up an expedition and looking for the treasure. Cole got the gang together, Ellis first and then Ritchie. He took along Woodley, his secretary, as a matter of course.

"Desmond got wind of it and was interested in the map. He coaxed Cole to let him have a look. When he saw that the treasure hunt was going to head for Moaxacelo, the island on which he had his smuggling depot, he decided he had to go along."

"And Desmond learned that Harvey Martin was coming to join Cole," supplied Guerra. "So, when the submarine raiders boarded the cruise ship, Butch Dugan had orders to murder Martin if he was on the ship. Martin was, so he was killed."

"We know that," said Winnie. "We were there, Jiminez."

"That is true, *senorita,*" confessed the captain. "For the moment I forgot."

"Martin was a fool," continued Parker. "When he saw Dugan, he must have been thinking about pirates and the island, for he said Ameena. Until then I'll bet that Dugan didn't even know that Martin was the man he was supposed to kill."

"I still don't see why they went to so much trouble to murder that poor old man," complained Winnie.

"Neither did I," Parker said. "Then I learned that Martin was expected to bring a gang of laborers from Poljos to the island with him. Desmond didn't want that to happen. With too many men on the island for the gang to be able to control, someone was bound to stumble on the submarine secret eventually."

"And Ritchie was the second victim," said Winnie. "Why was that, Rex?"

"That night that the men camped on the island, Desmond said he was tired and was going to turn in. He went into the tent, all right, but he crept out through the back. He saw Ellis go down to the water's edge, while Ritchie took a walk toward the jungle. Desmond followed Ritchie, who wandered around in the brush and finally wound up at the pool, just in time to see the submarine submerge and go into the secret underground river.

"Desmond didn't want the others to know what Ritchie had seen. He had a flame-thrower planted nearby, since he had been on the island before. So he killed Ritchie with the flame-thrower, got back to the tent and then joined Ellis and the others when they found the body."

"It was the Mask that saved us all, though," declared Guerra thankfully. "After I left you, *senorita,* up there on the mountain when we were fighting the Indians, I reached the hideout. There I found the Mask. It was he who told me what to say. We made the voice of Ameena convince the Indians that they must no longer fight the people on the island. But it was the burning of the big figure that was the master stroke. That, too, was the idea of the Mask."

"He's gone now," said Winnie sadly, "and we didn't even get a chance to thank him for all he has done for us."

"He gave me another crime story for the paper, anyway," put in Parker. "It's a good thing we left most of our clothes here in Poljos and took along only what we thought we would need on this particular island."

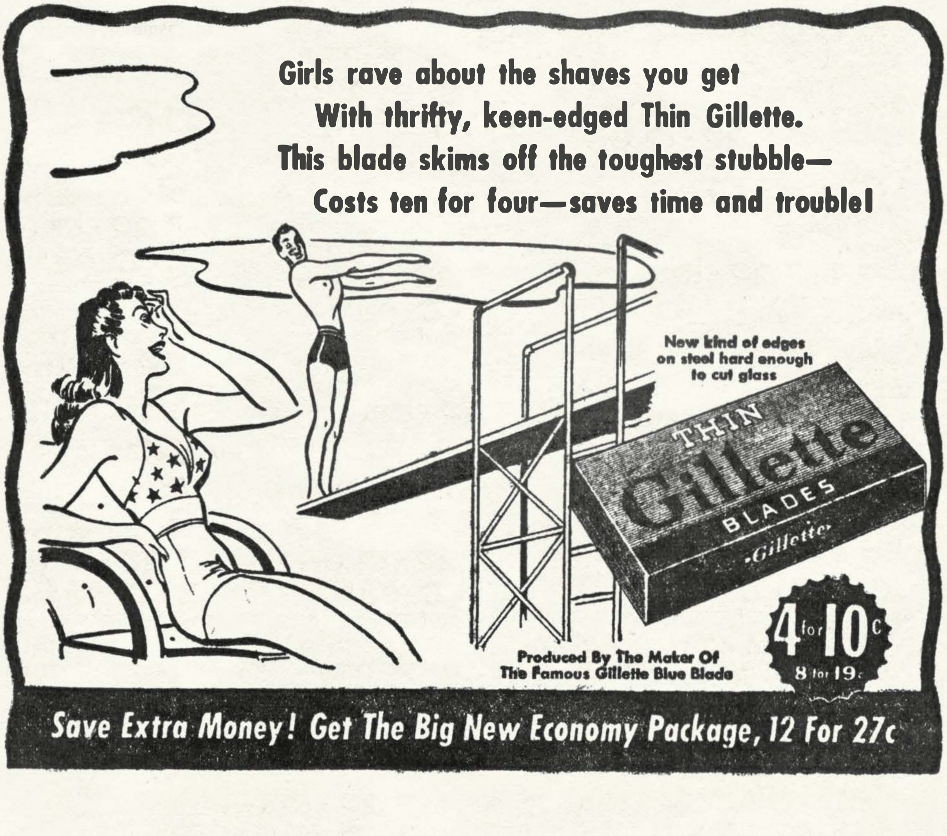
"It certainly is," replied Winnie with a smile. "I'd hate to spend the rest of my vacation in a jersey and slacks. By the way, Rex, the *St. Lawrence* pulls in this afternoon on the return trip. Do we leave with the ship?"

"We do," Parker said. "I want to get back to New York, or somewhere there isn't a thing even faintly resembling a volcano, a palm tree, a Carib Indian, or anything else that we found on Moaxacelo, the Island of Death."

"And I shall buy a new yacht with the reward money I am to get for helping to capture the pirates," concluded Guerra. "But I shall be desolate when you and the lovely *senorita* have gone, *amigo.*" The little Mexican sighed. "Indeed the life of a captain of the Mexican Coast Guard is not a happy one."

Next Issue's Novel: THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS

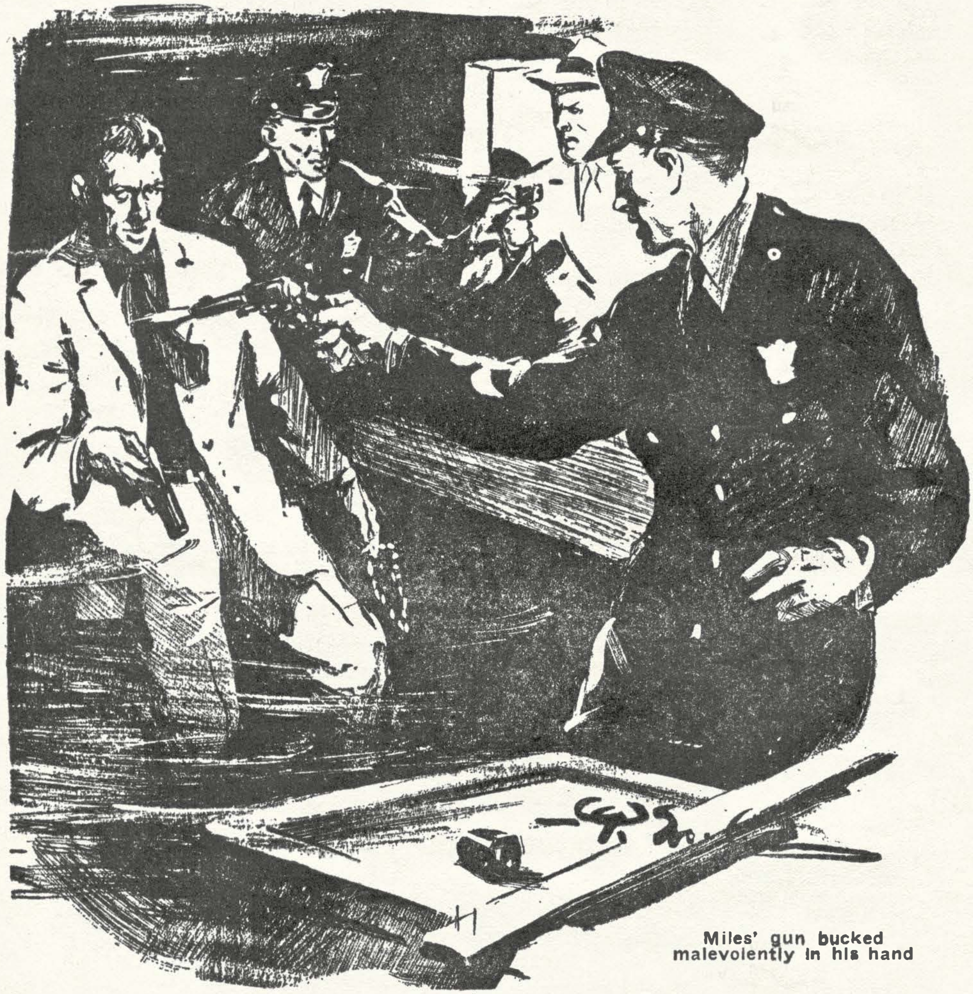
●


Girls rave about the shaves you get
With thrifty, keen-edged Thin Gillette.
This blade skims off the toughest stubble—
Costs ten for four—saves time and trouble!
New kind of edges on steel hard enough to cut glass
THIN Gillette BLADES Gillette
4 for 10c
8 for 19c
Produced By The Maker Of The Famous Gillette Blue Blade
Save Extra Money! Get The Big New Economy Package, 12 For 27c

POP-OFF ROOKIE

By LEO HOBAN

Author of "Fool's Gold," "Whistle of Doom," etc.



Miles' gun bucked malevolently in his hand

O'Rourke Knew Bert Miles Would Always Blow Up Under Pressure—but He Didn't Expect Him to Explode in a Killer's Face!

"IT'S too bad Bert Miles is such a pop-off," Captain Wallace said. He leaned far back in his swivel chair, until his heavy paunch protruded like an oversized barrel. "I had real faith in him when he joined the force. Now within two month's he's on the probationary list."

"And practically begging to be blackballed into dismissal," Sergeant O'Rourke added through teeth that were biting hard on an acrid-smelling black cigar. "I couldn't do anything with him last night in the cruiser car. I criticized every move he made, sneered at him, trying to prove whether he can take it. We gotta know whether he can take it, whether he's got the nerve. A cop without nerve is no man to have around when an emergency arises."

"What did he do?" Captain Wallace's shaggy eyebrows rolled up and he leaned forward anxiously. He pushed deserving men as far as possible, but he had no use for those who couldn't help him build the finest police force in the world.

"He blew up, turned that lashing tongue of his on me. He deserted the cruiser to get himself a pack of cigarettes, while I was in a restaurant, eating. That's how we happened to miss the radio flash on that jewelry store stick-up. There was nobody in the cruiser to catch the call."

"Who ate first?"

"He did, while I sat watch. He was just sore. I guess I'd been riding him too hard."

Wallace leaned back again, his face hard and cold.

"Well, you won't have to anymore. I'm sticking his notice on the bulletin board. Bert Miles is through."

"Not yet, Captain," O'Rourke pleaded quickly. "You said you had faith in him once. I've been riding with him every night for two months. I ain't sure yet that he wouldn't know how to meet an emergency. Something is bothering him, making him nervous and irritable, causing him to pop off. But I've got a hunch that he'll turn out okay. Let me have him for just ten more days."

Captain Wallace's eyes, resting musingly on O'Rourke, lost some of their coldness. They had been rookies together, had often faced death side by side. They understood each other.

"You're a hard-bitten man, O'Rourke," Captain Wallace said. "And you always do make it tough on rookies—almost as tough as I do, till they prove themselves. But you're square and not too dumb. You can have the pop-off for ten more days. And I hope, for my sake, that you're not making a mistake. Remember, I don't tolerate mistakes."

Sergeant O'Rourke rose, saluted.

"Thank you, Captain. I promise that in ten days I'll find out if he can take it."

"That you will, I hope," Captain Wallace said, extending his hand. "Good luck, O'Rourke. Maybe you're right. Maybe Bert Miles has what it takes to make a good cop. But don't let up on him. Keep riding him into blowing up. We can't use pop-offs here."

Walking down the police corridor that was heavy with disinfectant, Sergeant O'Rourke felt a tremor of doubt. He'd placed himself on record that Bert Miles would produce, yet inwardly he believed Bert Miles was bent on making his record as black as was humanly possible.

BERT MILES sat behind the wheel of the cruiser in the police garage. He had the motor turning idly. Two frowning creases cut deeply into his forehead and his sharp jaw jutted belligerently. Off-guard now, his eyes were not keen, simply hurt. His broad shoulders were hunched like a man waiting for the sweep of the guillotine.

He knew why Sergeant O'Rourke was late in reporting. He was in with his side-kick, Captain Wallace. Bert Miles knew his fate had been sealed and he was scared. He needed this job. Not only was his self-respect at stake, but his mother and sister were dependent on him.

Silently he cursed the fate that had paired him with O'Rourke. Indomitable, unbending, an acid-tongued martinet, O'Rourke had hammered at him for two solid months. Seething fury had mounted in Miles until every nerve in his body was frazzled-edged, begging for action that never came. He was being driven so frantic that now he doubted his ability to get out of a jam when under pressure.

He'd tried to shrug off the flood of pressure that O'Rourke's tongue had ignited within him, and failed. He'd taken to popping off, being smart alecky in unconscious defense. And with every wisecrack he'd uttered, he'd known shame.

The door on the far side was flung open and scowling Sergeant O'Rourke sagged into the front seat. As usual, his face was expressionless and the gray hairs at his temples seemed to bristle.

Miles hated him as he never had believed he could hate any man. He sat quiet, waiting for O'Rourke to spring the bad news.

"Well, numbskull, is our beat in this garage?" the sergeant growled. "Or maybe you feel safe in here, off the streets where jewel thieves rob stores while kid cops buy snipes in the cigar store."

His voice was low, yet in it was the crackling fury of a whip. Miles flushed, clasped gears and plummeted the sedan recklessly up the incline.

"Your partners before must have been rosy-checked Boy Scouts who didn't smoke," he snarled. "Just meek little yes-men who took a lot of loose lip so you'd make nice reports on them. What an ornery old buzzard you are!"

EVEN as he said it, Miles cursed himself for a fool. But ever since he could remember, he'd talked too much, bitterly resenting any criticism he thought unwarranted.

O'Rourke's face didn't change, his head didn't turn, but Miles saw the corded muscles along his jaw go taut.

"Now if you'll close that big mouth of yours," the sergeant said in a voice flinty as steel, "I'll tell you a hunch I have. Between Forty-third and Forty-sixth, on Third, there's a man named Carson. The Department thinks he's a jewelry fence. His office is wherever he's standing at the curb. Give that district a play, swinging back to it as often as possible. Maybe we'll get a break that will give you the chance to regain part of your face in the Department. Understand, rookie?"

"Yes, sir," Miles replied suddenly meek.

He'd tried being meek on other occasions, but O'Rourke's savage comments had always changed that meekness into vitriol.

It was on their fourth swing through the district, with fitful gusts of rain bringing a midnight chill, when O'Rourke's stubby right hand gave a sudden jerk toward a dark doorway.

"That's Carson talking to some mug! Pull this hack up. I'm going back to look 'em over."

Miles braked the cruiser, his heart suddenly racing.

"Don't go back alone," he advised. "We'll both go."

O'Rourke's eyes grew ominous.

"I'm in charge here. You obey orders. Stay here and cover me—if you've got the nerve."

Miles tensed and he sat stiffly upright, both hands clenched tightly around the steering wheel. His knuckles were white, frantically battling to keep a fist from heedlessly slashing out at O'Rourke's smug face. He heard O'Rourke open the door and step to the curb. Only then did he trust himself to look in his partner's direction.

O'Rourke's hard heels slapped against the wet sidewalk, sounding ponderous and official in the quiet. Suddenly a shot was ear-splitting in the stillness, banging up and echoing back against the high walls of the office buildings.

Miles dragged his unwilling long legs across the gear shift. He grabbed hold of the jamb of the open door, propelled himself onto the sidewalk. But he fell flat, his legs trailing from the sedan.

His heart pounded furiously and he felt a growing paralysis of fear. Never in his youthful imaginings of police work—when he had naturally fought grimly and courageously and victoriously—had he expected a reaction like this in his first taste of action.

He saw O'Rourke down on one knee, his police positive thundering and lancing yellow-red flame. Plate glass tinkled around the doorway and three shots boomed a quick answer to O'Rourke's fusillade. O'Rourke pitched flat against the sidewalk.

Miles tried to scramble upright, but his legs were ungovernable things, as loose and weak as wet spaghetti. He kept jerking at the gun in his holster, despair growing with each leap of panic. He suddenly realized with a shock that in his fury against O'Rourke he had failed to loosen the safety strap.

THE men sprang from the protection of the doorway. O'Rourke's gun blasted again and one man went down. The other found protection behind a parked car and, bending low in the protecting darkness, he ran across the street.

Shaking, Miles got to his feet and began running after the vague form of the fugitive. As he passed O'Rourke, he finally succeeded in wrenching his positive clear from the holster. It seemed incredible that he should reach the corner so swiftly . . . . and more incredible that he should find himself totally alone.

The fugitive had disappeared.

O'Rourke came panting up, his mouth a twisted white line of fury.

They searched the block, avoiding each other's eyes. Miles kept muttering curses. O'Rourke remained grimly quiet.

When they returned to the man on the sidewalk, four mondescript night owls were crowded in a sadistic circle. O'Rourke pushed fiercely between them.

The hood's fedora had rolled into the gutter. The blue hole in his forehead bubbled blood upward against the raindrops. Miles unexpectedly felt weak and sick at the sight.

When the morgue wagon came, O'Rourke explained: "I shot him. His pal got away. It looked like Georgie Bernadino. They cut down on me before I had a chance to question them. Miles was backing me up from the cruiser. I'd told him to stay there. We'll make a full report in the morning, but right now we're going out to look for Berandino. Have a radio want put on him."

Cruising again, O'Rourke rode for three blocks in penetrating silence before saying in an impassive voice: "You kicked it, kid. You might have stopped the mug if you'd been on your toes. You didn't get the gat out until the mug was away on a safe lam. Scared?"

Miles' lips twisted bitterly. What could he say? By a queer paradox, he hadn't been scared for himself, but the suddenness of the attack had left him frightened. He had known a fear that any ordinary mortal might experience when guns boomed and bullets droned ominously in his first conflict.

O'Rourke seemed to understand. His face was not so grim, his voice almost affable.

"Maybe you'd better not answer."

Miles' shame pyramided into galling agony. O'Rourke chatted amiably of inconsequential matters, being strangely friendly and by his very politeness piling coals upon Miles' humiliation.

Suddenly Miles understood. O'Rourke was being kind, almost pitying, telling him without saying so that he was through. He hadn't made the grade.

WONDERING grimly what O'Rourke expected of him, he felt his arm muscles tense in an overwhelming desire to fight.

"Berandino hangs out around Fifty-fourth," O'Rourke said. "Maybe we can pick him up. . . . You know, my wife's gonna have a birthday in two weeks. I can't figure out what to give her. What would you suggest, bud?"

It was idle talk, the kind two pals of long standing might make to waste away long, drab hours on a monotonous shift. Miles' mouth felt dry and furry.

"I wouldn't know, sir. I never had a wife."

"You should get one bud. You need one."

Miles' right foot pressed down viciously on the brake pedal. His right hand came off the gear shift as the cruiser skidded. When that hand came away from the gear shift, it was a balled fist that was shaking furiously under O'Rourke's nose.

"You sanctimonious old clown, you drove me haywire for two months! Naturally I fumbled a trick I wasn't expecting. I couldn't even think straight about those rats in the doorway, because I was hating you so much. And now you want to rub it in, be polite, tell me that you're a better man than I am. Sergeant, you're nuts! You couldn't carry my shoelaces, let alone by weight. Now, *Mr.* O'Rourke, how would you like to go to blazes?"

"I'll drive, instead," O'Rourke said calmly. "I gotta be sure that things are done right in my cruiser. And never forget, bud, I'm in charge. I give the orders here."

"Sure," Miles said venomously." You give orders. I just sit still and take all the abuse you can dish out. Not any more, though. Another crack out of you and I'll paste your mouth shut!"

"I want to explain something," O'Rourke said gently, almost resignedly. "What you been through happens to every rookie. We wanted to see if you'd blowup, or if you could control your nerves."

"And I can't, huh?"

"You can't. You blow under pressure. I'm sorry. Think something will happen that will make me change my mind?"

Miles kept silent. He knew that in the few hours preceding dawn, it was illogical to suppose that anything would transpire that would change his condemned fate. Perhaps O'Rourke was right. He was just a pop-off who shouldn't ever have been outfitted in an officer's uniform.

O'Rourke was piloting the cruiser in his heavy-handed, cumbersome way. After walking a beat for so many years, he would always feel out of his element in the luxurious efficiency of an automobile. He drove like an old woman who was afraid of frightening a team of horses.

He cut the corner leading away from the docks, had to yank viciously left on the wheel to avoid the onrushing red sedan. But one quick glance at the occupants of the sedan had been sufficient for O'Rourke. He slid from under the wheel, was out of the cruiser, yelling:

"Take over and drive! Berandino was in that sedan!"

MILES behind the wheel, gunned the motor and made the tires scream in a sharp U-turn. O'Rourke grabbed the handle of the other door as the machine completed its quick turn. He stood on the running-board. drawing his automatic.

The sedan's tail-light was a bobbing speck, heading into the warehouse district. Miles took the cruiser's speedometer heedlessly into the stratosphere until the tail-light blinked out. He cursed. Perhaps the lights had been extinguished. Maybe it had made a turn into the maze of streets that lay ominously somnolent between the gaunt procession of soot-smeared warehouses.

His chance—and he'd muffed it again.

O'Rourke's fist pounded against the glass pane. Miles lowered the cruiser's window.

"Try Fourteenth Street!" O'Rourke bellowed. "Johnny Bernadino used to have a still years ago in an old abandoned warehouse down near Walnut. It'd make a perfect hideway."

For the first time in months, Miles' heart leaped gladly. He knew that district, knew it only as a wild kid knew a district that he'd played games in. He knew every byway, every pathway in and out of the abandoned warehouses.

His elation became acute disappointment. Fourteenth and Walnut Streets were deserted. No cars, not a person was in sight.

O'Rourke waved him down and leaped off the running-board to examine the driveway that led into an abandoned brewery.

Miles saw him wave his arms impatiently. He sprang to O'Rourke's side, looking down at the fresh tire tracks that disappeared behind the huge sliding doors, before O'Rourke had finished grunting his satisfaction.

"Here's your chance to vindicate yourself, bud. I'm guessing that inside we'll find Bernadino and the three mugs who were in the sedan with him. Scared?"

"No, sir," Miles said, loosening his gun. "If you'll take the front, I'll go in through the back. I know how to get inside."

"I'm giving the orders," O'Rourke snapped. "We're going to bust in through the old office door. Understand, bud?"

"Yes, and you're out of your head. You're going to get hurt if the jewel thieves are inside. It's dark, a perfect trap where they can spot you and you can't do a thing about it. I'm going in through the back."

"You're doing as you're told, pop-off, or else."

"It's or else, then. The rule book says to take as many precautions as possible. Why get yourself killed?"

O'Rourke glared, turned on his heel and made for the old office door. Miles began to run in the other direction. His breath was coming in agonizing gasps as he plowed through refuse in the areaway to the rear of the building. He knew the location of the air shaft entrance that would bring him inside from the second floor, but there was insufficient time to use the shaft.

HE raised his right foot and kicked in the window pane. The shatter of glass was deafening in the quiet.

He went head-first through the window as a gun banged and a slug droned hungrily near his head.

He hit the floor, rolling, and came up with his automatic clenched in a steady fist. A deadly calm held him. Here was the fight he'd been looking for. Here was surcease from galling insults.

Two guns roared up front. There was a yelp of pain, then silence.

Miles started forward on his hands and knees. He went for to the right, until his shoulder brushed the wall. A blurred figure passed near him, walking on tip-toe. Miles, smiling without humor in the dark let the man pass. Then he went forward ,with the sure memory of childhood guiding him, making a wide arc to his left.

The dim ray of light that peeked from under a crack in the doorway almost was indiscernible. Miles stood erect and moved back into the shadows.

"We'd better take him now," a voice said from the other side of the partition. "That partner of his will be bringing help. Let's scram."

"Last I saw of my 'partner; he was running like a scared rabbit away from trouble," O'Rourke snarled in a bitter, tight voice. "A cop—running away."

"Cops don't run away," the first voice said. "And it didn't sound like mice breaking that window in back."

"You don't know the cop I'm talking about," O'Rourke growled. "The yellow rat cracks under pressure. He's just a pop-off."

Miles, watching the dark blur approach from the building's rear. felt like laughing aloud. He supposed this was how a man felt, after being restored from the strange clutch of insanity that had held his mind in a vise.

The blur became a man, and the man tugged open the door.

Miles galvanized into action. An upraised foot sent the man spinning into the small room. Miles followed him like a hurricane, then blinked in the uncertain light.

Five men were there. One was O'Rourke, sitting on a chair and clutching a bullet-punctured hand. The four men all carried guns. One, easily recognized as dapper Georgie Bernadino, had two guns—his own and O'Rourke's.

On a table in the middle of the room, an open valise squatted. Divided into four even piles near the valise lay jewlry, gems.

"Get 'em up!" Miles started to say. "You're all under arrest for—"

The man with two guns tried a snapshot with the positive. Miles' gun bucked malevolently in his hand, and kept bucking. He felt the shocking impact of a slug against his right shoulder that drove him flat against the wall.

HE saw two men go down. Then O'Rourke came surging from his chair, swinging his one good fist. The room became a roaring inferno of deafening sound. Another man went down.

Miles' gun clicked, empty. He

threw it with all his remaining strength at the face of the dapper Bernadino.

The thug swung his gun-filled fists upward. But O'Rourke reached with one hand and twisted his positive free. There was one more shot—O'Rourke's and Bernadino was flat on his face on the floor.

O'Rourke spun about to face Miles.

"You'll never learn to obey orders, I suppose. But at least I know how you'll act under pressure. I was wrong, being so careless. It it hadn't been for you, I'd have—"

"But your orders were to break in the rear," Miles said innocently. "That's how my report will be made out."

O'Rourke looked levelly at Miles.

"Always popping off, eh, partner?"

"Yes, sir," Miles answered respectfully.

He wanted to ride the cruiser with O'Rourke for many years to come.

He knew intuitively that his new partner felt the same way.

"Pop off all you want, copper," said O'Rourke gently. "I'm beginning to like it."

The Most Sensational Criminal Spy Mystery in Years!

THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS

A Complete Book-Length Novel Starring Rex Parker in Fighting Action

Featured in the Next Issue

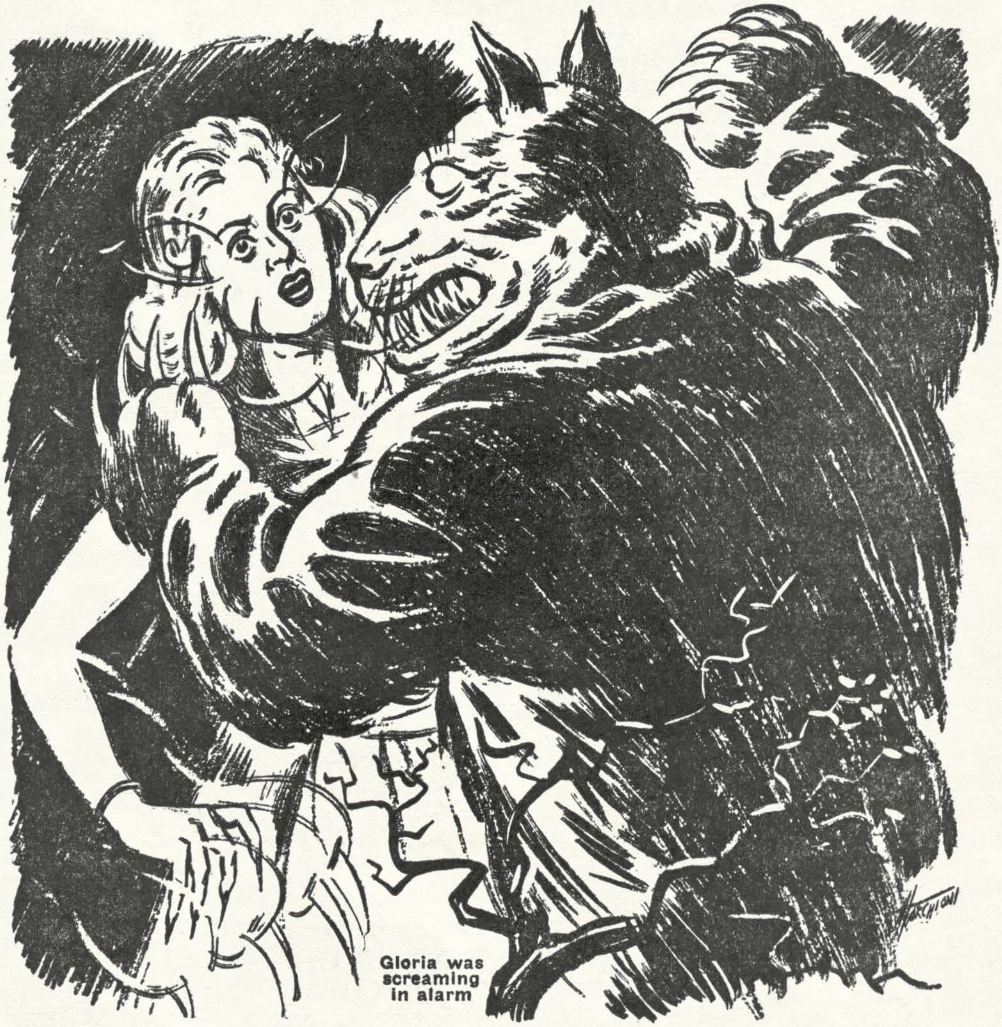
"THE PARTY FAVORITE"
TOPS 'EM ALL!
PEPSI-COLA
REG. U.S. PAT. OFF.
5¢
BIGGER BETTER
"ACE THIRST-BUSTER"

Pepsi-Cola is made only by Pepsi-Cola Company, Long Island City, N. Y. Bottled locally by authorized bottlers.

CATS CAN KILL

By RAY CUMMINGS

Author of "Castle of Horror," "Souvenir of Doom," etc.



Gloria was screaming in alarm

Murder Assumes a Strange and Ghastly Form When an Ingenious Killer Resurrects an Ancient Legendary Beast of Prey

REALLY, I'm not afraid of cats. That's the ironic part. Of everyone concerned in the ghastly tragedy, I am the only one who actually knows all the truth, so why should cats frighten me? It's silly. And it's also ironic that now, when it is all over, they've got me locked up here because I told them the truth and they think I'm afraid of cats.

I did tell them the truth—that is, almost all of it. I've just got one little secret which I'll never tell anybody, a little thing I'm keeping here in my room. My release! You can call it that if you like, but I'll never have to use it. Honestly I'm not afraid, except of just one cat. I wouldn't tell anyone, but it's lurking outside right now.

My room is on the ground-floor of this big, white, stone house. They call it a sanatorium, but it's for crazy people. I know that. They can't lie to me. It's ironic, too, that I should wind up here, exactly where I expected to put Gloria. Now she's dead, or at least her body is. But the rest of her—

The cat is lurking out there in the woods. I can see it from my window where, often at night, I sit holding onto the iron bars and staring out. The edge of the woods is only a couple of hundred feet away, beyond the flowerbeds and the stingy lawn. I can sometimes see the big, tawny shape of the cat out there as it crouches in the thickets. It stares at me with its murderous green eyes. Gloria had green eyes.

I must be clearer, briefer. I want to tell the whole story exactly as it occurred, so that anyone who reads this will realize how utterly silly it is that I should be locked up here. Nobody knows I'm writing these pages. I keep them hidden under my mattress when burly Carlton, whom I jocularly call my valet, or old Dr. Jenkins, who is in charge of this crazy place, come in.

To be brief, my name is Dr. James Porter. I'm a physician, or I was. I'm thirty-three now. You don't need to know all my history. It isn't important. I've had a lot of bad luck. They wouldn't let me practice medicine after the first year or two, so finally I got a job in business. I was a salesman.

The important thing, though, is that when I was thirty—jut three years ago—I met Gloria. I fell in love with her. Well, you can call it that. It was easy to do, just what I had been looking for, as a matter of fact.

GLORIA was independently rich and beautiful, with a weird sort of beauty that gave you the shivers. I'll explain that part of it presently. Anyway, even though she gave me the jitters, I determined to marry her. I didn't want to be tied to a woman. Not me! I just wanted control of her money and then I'd get rid of her. I played my cards carefully. I'm a clever fellow, as you'll realize when you've read this. Within a month or two, Gloria was falling in love with me.

And then Tom Rance came along. He was a big, handsome fellow, younger than me and as rich as Gloria. What chance did I have against all that? Even worse, instead of having a business, Rance gave almost all his time to a hobby. I suppose to a woman an amateur hunter would be romantic. His specialty was capturing any kind of wild animal, provided it was an unusual specimen—extra big maybe, or something like that—and donate it to a zoo so he would get adoring write-ups and flattering pictures in the papers.

That was a lucky circumstance for me. All my careful plans would have been wrecked. His wedding date for Gloria was set. Just a week before, he decided to go up into the hills alone for a night or two. He intended to live in an abandoned shack miles from anywhere at all, while he set a special trap which he'd contrived, to try to catch an amazingly gigantic wildcat which the mountaineers claimed had been seen in that vicinity.

Luck was with me. I admit it. Rance caught that wildcat, all right. We had proof of it, because his diary memos were found—data on how he trapped it, which he expected the zoo would publish and give him a lot of applause. We found the memos on the table in the shack two days later, when a party went up to investigate why he hadn't returned.

The terrible tragedy was obvious. Evidently he'd lugged the trap, with the huge wildcat in it, up to the shack. Then the fierce beast had got loose. It must have been a ghastly fight, with Rance and a raging, frightened wildcat shut up in that little room.

We figured he must have tried to get it back into the trap, instead of trying to open the door and let it out, or to get out himself. You couldn't kill an ordinary house cat with your bare hands, if you were shut up with it in a room like that, without getting yourself scratched to bloody shreds. And this cat was a giant.

Anyway, we found the room wrecked, with the empty trap lying there. The body of Rance was lying there, too. There was blood all over the place and Rance's body was almost impossible to identify. His face had been torn to ribbons of red pulp and his throat was even worse. He'd evidently fallen unconscious and bled his life away. The giant feline was gone. That part was obvious, too. Apparently it had taken a flying leap at one of the windows, smashed the pane and landed outside on the rocks.

Gloria was shocked—a tragedy like that to the man she was so soon to have married! I was her consoler. Rance's death brought us closer together than we had ever been before. Naturally she turned to me. I could see that when time had eased her grief, she would marry me. And there was another thing, a weird thing which made the shock to her even worse. Only she and I knew about it, and Tom Rance, who now was dead.

I recall that evening when Gloria told Rance and me of the strange heritage which was hers. She told us just before she and Rance became engaged. We were all three good friends then and she must have known that both Rance and I were in love with her.

I remember that Rance was talking about his hobby of catching wild animals alive.

"I think I'll set a trap for you, Gloria," he said and laughed. "A real feline specimen. You are that, you know. I'll donate you to a zoo and then—"

THE look on her face checked him. He had meant it as a joke, of course. He was like that, always laughing, joking. But this wasn't funny. I'll never forget the look on her face, a sort of startled horror, a wild, frightened look in her deep, green eyes. She drew in her breath and her long, tapering fingers convulsively gripped the arms of her chair, so that I saw the knuckles turning white.

"Why—why, Gloria!" he gasped. "Oh, I say, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you."

And then she told us. She took it seriously, all right, that old legend of her family. They had come originally from mid-Europe, but all the members were probably dead now, except herself. I suppose she told us with a sense of fair play, to let us know what we were in for, if we proposed to her.

[*Turn page*]

WANTED

MEN and WOMEN

Work For The Government

Salaries $1700-$2600 Per Year

No Layoffs! Vacations With Pay!
Regular Raises! Good Pensions!

A LIFETIME JOB

★ **RAILWAY POSTAL CLERKS** ★

CITY MAIL CARRIERS ★ CLERKS—FILE CLERKS
POST OFFICE CLERKS ★ STENOGRAPHERS—TYPISTS
RURAL MAIL CARRIERS ★ INSPECTORS OF CUSTOMS

★ **Patrol and Immigration Inspectors** ★

Pay for Course Only After You Are Appointed & Working

So sure are we that our simplified Interstate Home Study Course of coaching will result in your passing the government examination and being appointed, that we are willing to accept 1,000 enrollments on the following basis. The price of our complete 10-week course is $30 plus $3 Examiners' Fee.

We are willing to give you the course with the understanding that you are to pay for it ONLY AFTER YOU ARE APPOINTED AND WORKING. Should you take the examination and fail, or not be appointed for any reason whatsoever, the loss will be ours, and you will not owe us one cent for the course!

GET READY IMMEDIATELY!
FULL Particulars FREE!

Clip and Mail This Coupon NOW!

INTERSTATE HOME STUDY ACADEMY T9
901 BROAD ST., DIV. T9, NEWARK, N. J.

Please RUSH me FREE particulars how to qualify for a government job.

Name ....
(Please print plainly in pencil)

Address ....

City .... State.........

If you wish Paste on Postcard and Mail.

"A feline?" she repeated, trying to smile whimsically. "I—I do suggest that to you, don't I?"

It's difficult to describe Gloria. She was tall and slender, dark-haired, with a pale, fragile beauty. Her heart wasn't any too strong. I knew that. And I also knew that she was highly neurotic, with a sort of fundamental, harried nervousness. Her eyes were a deep, glowing green. Even when they were tender, they had always given me a shiver. Green seemed to be her favorite color. I remember she was wearing a slinky green gown. She was certainly catlike when she walked in it.

That's queer. I seem to be realizing for the first time as I write this that everything about her was catlike.

What she told us was weird, ghastly. Generations ago in her family, so her mother and her grandmother had said, some of her female ancestors had been stricken with a weird disease known as lycanthrobia. I'd heard of it, of course. Not this fabled werewolf, or woman-into-cat stuff. Lycanthrobia—or lycanthropy, if you like—is a brain affliction that makes the sufferer think he is some form of wild beast, a werewolf or werecat, or any kind of wild animal. During the seizure, he acts like an animal and actually believes he is one.

"Oh, I say!" Rance protested when she had told us that much, "that's all rot, unless you're insane. Then I suppose anything's possible for you to imagine."

"Lycanthrobia," she murmured, still with that same whimsical little smile. "And our women, my grandmother said, thought always that they were felines. During attacks, two of them killed the persons they loved best. Clawed them, tore at their throats, the way—the way a leopard or a tigress would claw."

Suddenly I realized what sharply pointed, long fingernails Gloria had. She wore them even longer than most women and tinted them a spectacular glistening gray. Now, with a shudder, she seemed to be trying to hide her hands from me as I sat staring at them.

Don't think that I took any stock in such an incredible story as that. Of course I didn't nor did Rance. Then she added something even wilder. One of her ancestors—her grandmother's grandmother, so the legend went—had died in a seizure of lycanthrobia. Her spirit had taken possession of a huge house cat. It had gone wild, attacked the family and then dashed out into the woods. It never was seen again.

"How silly!" Rance exclaimed. "Why, Gloria dear, is this what's worrying you? Forget it!"

NATURALLY I agreed with him, but I'm a clever fellow. Right then my plan came to me. How easy, after I was married to Gloria, it would be to play upon that terror! With her weak heart and her neurotic condition, I could easily drive her mad. Perhaps it might even kill her. And then I would have her fortune with no strings at all. Nothing would stop me then from doing what I liked in life. A rich man and free as the air, I would not even have a wife to hamper me.

Oh, I had everything worked out. I had decided upon the drugs I would carefully give her—I had been a physician, remember—which would further upset her nervous system and intensify the hallucinations that already were obsessing her.

For a short time, though, my plans went wrong. It wasn't me she wanted to marry, but Tom Rance. She became engaged to him. Then my luck returned. That wildcat killed him.

"A woman with lycanthrobia kills the one she loves best."

That was what Gloria had told us her grandmother had said. Did I actually believe that Gloria had killed Tom Rance? Of course I didn't. That would be silly.

But what luck it was for me! She wasn't sure whether, in her sleep that night, she had done it or not. What a wonderful start for my plan!

"You're talking nonsense, Gloria," I told her, the night of Rance's funeral. I sat with my arm around her, comforting her. "You're naturally upset by the queer circumstances of his death, that's all. The legend is absurd. If he hadn't been a hunter, nothing would have happened. You need a safe, unadventurous man like me."

They think in this sanatorium,

where I'm writing this, that I'm obsessed with a fear of cats. That's a lie. I wasn't afraid of Gloria, either. She gave me the creeps, particularly her eyes, but that was all. I never took any stock in that lycanthrobia business. It's just a lot of bunk. How could I believe in it when I devoted all my time to fostering the fear of it in her? Don't you see the logic of that? I wasn't afraid of her because I thought she had killed Rance. A big cat did it. All the evidence was there.

Of course I wasn't afraid of her! I married her, didn't I? If I had been afraid of her, I would have made sure she didn't know where I was. But I kept insisting that all hunters eventually are attacked by animals, some fatally. If she married a civilized man like me, though, she would have no reason to fear I would be killed by ony sort of cat, big or small. I just wouldn't come in contact with them.

She began to accept my line of reasoning with fewer and fewer reservations. A year after Rance died, I married Gloria.

At last I had the chance to carry out my ingenious plan. I worked slowly, cautiously, preparing each step in advance. Getting her to make a will naming me as sole beneficiary was the most difficult part, because she was convinced that I would die first. How, she wouldn't say, but it was pretty plain that she was in constant fear of killing me some night. I convinced her that making her will would show her defiance to her subconscious mind.

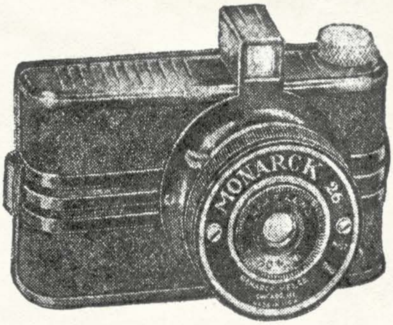
Then I started the more subtle details. "Gloria, dear, why do you walk so silently?" I would ask, pretending to laugh shakily. "Sometimes I get startled when I turn around and see you there."

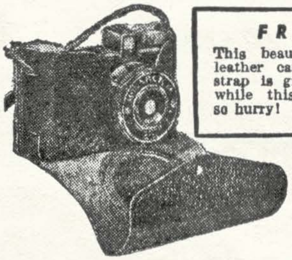
THE lurking horror would leap to her green eyes and her long, pointed gray nails became twitching claws. We never spoke of lycanthrobia, or Tom Rance and his weird death, but I never gave her a chance to forget them.

"You're happy, Gloria?"I would ask with touching haste.

"Oh, yes, Jim. Of course, dear."

[*Turn page*]





NEW!

FREE OFFER!
This beautiful Sportsman simulated leather carrying case with shoulder strap is given FREE to every buyer while this introductory offer lasts, so hurry!

Candid-Type
CAMERA

AMAZING INTRODUCTORY OFFE
TO READERS OF THIS MAGAZIN
FOR ONLY $1.00
The MONARCK
NATIONALLY-FAMOUS CANDID-TYPE CAMERA

We are presenting at a sensationally low price the greatest camera o the year, backed by a 100% full guarantee. This camera, bein offered to readers of this magazine at an amazing introductory pric of $1.00, possesses features formerly found only in much highe priced cameras.

TAKES 16 SHARP, CLEAR PICTURES

MONEY-SAVING FEATURE—THIS CAMERA TAKES 1 PICTURES ON ANY LOW PRICE STANDARD ROLL OF FILM, WHICH CAN BE BOUGHT EVERYWHERE.
Just think! Each picture with your Monarck Camera costs you onl a little over 1c apiece--And here are other outstanding features-- genuine Graf, ground and polished Precision Lens, Eye Level Vie Finder, adjustable for snapshot or time exposure. Streamlined- Designed Plastic Case. Imagine all these features in a camera fo only $1.00!

SEND NO MONEY!

Just fill out coupon. Pay postman only $1.00 plus C.O.D. charges o delivery, or send $1.00 with coupon and we'll pay all postage charges. You'll be both amazed and pleased when you receive this marvelou Candid-type camera. If you are not perfectly satisfied, return camer and case, and we'll gladly refund your dollar. You must hurry, fo our stock is limited. Clip the coupon and get your camera and fre carrying case at once!

THE CAMERA MAN, Dept. T-1
139 N. Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois.
☐ Send Camera and free carrying case. I'll pay postman $1.00 plus postage.
☐ ENCLOSED IS $1.00 for Camera and free carrying case, you to pay all postage charges.
Name ....
Address ....
Town or City ....
Take advantage of this big film buy! 5 rolls of film (80 pictures) for only $1.00)
☐ Enclosed find $1.00 for 5 rolls of film, postage paid.

Increased
production
means more

Jobs for MACHINISTS
and bigger pay for men who know their work

This home-study course gives you the practical facts on modern machines, up-to-date methods you need to advance in machine shop work. Take advantage of the other man's experience as found in books, to solve your problems, increase your efficiency, with

The AMERICAN MACHINISTS' LIBRARY

6 volumes—2368 pages—2516 illustrations
(A combined home-study course and reference library)

This library of machine shop practice was written for practical men. It gives you the best methods for every kind of machine shop work. It fully explains lathes, drills, and other machine tools and their operation, automatic screw machines, speeds and feeds, gear design and production, jigs and fixtures, punch and die work, metal surfacing, etc., etc. Plainly written—completely illustrated—the best kind of help to the machine shop man who wants to advance himself.

No money down—special price—easy payments.

EXAMINATION COUPON

McGRAW-HILL BOOK CO., 330 W. 42nd St., New York

Send me for ten days' examination the American Machinists' Library, 6 vols. If satisfactory I will send you $1.50 in 10 days and $3.00 monthly until the price of $19.50 is paid. If not wanted, I will return the books postpaid. (To insure prompt shipment write plainly and fill in all lines.)

Name ....
Home Address..
City and State...
Position ....
Name of Company..................................TH-11-41

INVENTORS Protect your idea with a Patent. Don't delay. Get Free "Patent Guide." No charge for preliminary information. CLARENCE A. O'BRIEN—Registered Patent Attorney, IL8 Adams Bldg., Washington, D. C.

MANY STYLES TO SELECT FROM

GLASSES AS LOW AS $1.95

16 DAYS TRIAL
SATISFACTION GUARANTEED or Money Back. Attractive styles. Low prices. BROKEN GLASSES REPAIRED.

SEND NO MONEY Just send your name for FREE Circular today.
Advance Spectacle Co., 537 S. Dearborn, Dept. T-11, Chicago

TYPEWRITER 1/3 PRICE
STANDARD OFFICE MODELS
About 1/3 MFRS. ORIG. PRICE
Easiest Terms as Low as **70¢ A WEEK**
All models completely rebuilt like brand new.
FULL 2-YEAR GUARANTEE
No Money Down—10 Day Trial
FREE COURSE IN TYPING INCLUDED
Send for FREE price smashing literature in colors. Fully describes and shows all models. See our literature before you buy. SEND TODAY.
INTERNATIONAL TYPEWRITER EXCH.
Dept. 1188 231 W. Monroe St., Chicago, Ill.
10c A DAY

THE BIG QUARTER'S WORTH
BEST CROSSWORD PUZZLES
NOW ON SALE AT ALL STANDS

"I want to make you happy. I'm trying very hard, darling. I want you to purr with contentment all the time."

She gave a little frightened cry when I said it.

"Oh, Gloria, I'm sorry! I thought you'd forgotten all that idiotic stuff."

Clever, eh? I was working up to my big climax. Gloria wasn't a bit well all through those months. She was horribly nervous, tense, waiting, almost as though she sensed that something terrible was going to happen.

She was afraid to go to a doctor. Why should she go, when I had been a physician? She thought that the injections and tablets I gave her almost every night were just harmless sedatives to soothe her nerves. What a joke! I drugged her with habit-forming narcotics. Then, for days, the tablets were nothing at all but sugar, or bicarbonate of soda, so that her nerves jangled with craving for the drugs.

And of course she thought the lycanthrobia was brewing in her. I did nothing to mitigate that terrible knowledge of jangled nerves and trembling hands and a brain that was constantly throbbing.

The development of my plot was exciting to me. I remember that I laughed a lot. Sometimes, for what she would think was no reason at all, I'd just sit and laugh. That was when she began staring at me so queerly with those weird green eyes. It sort of gave me the jitters, I admit, but it didn't frighten me. That should be perfectly clear by now. You see, I was giving all my time to frightening her, so it stands to reason that it was impossible for me to be afraid of her. You see that, don't you?

"Gloria, darling, don't stare at me like that," I said once. "You—you look so queer, as though you were going to jump at me."

See how clever, how subtle I was? I had realized that my cue was to pretend to be afraid of her. Sometimes, when she came toward me, I'd jump away. Then I'd just pass it off with a laugh. Afraid of her? Of course I wasn't but it terrified her to think that I was.

Often, during those long spring

evenings, we'd sit alone together in our little bungalow. It was about two miles from town, set in a grove of firs on a lonely hillside, with a stretch of Canadian forest down the declivity and Moose Lake shimmering under the distant moonlight.

Those were fearful evenings for her. I pretended I was so frightened that I couldn't talk. I'd just sit, moodily, staring at her. And then I'd laugh, because it really was funny, my terrifying her like that. Occasionally we'd hear the call of a wild animal off in the forest. A wildcat, or maybe a panther, some big cat roaming out there.

When those somber green eyes of Gloria would give me the jitters, I'd leave her alone and go out walking in the woods. Funny how you can get to imagining things. Once, out in the woods in the moonlight, I was laughing with the thought of how I was terrorizing Gloria. Pretty soon she'd be dead, or put away in an asylum and I'd have full charge of her money.

Suddenly I got the idea that some kind of big cat was stalking me. It was a cat with green eyes—like Gloria's. I don't know whether I actually saw it or not, but it naturally startled me. I jumped up and ran home.

I recall how Gloria put her arms around me.

"My poor Jim," she murmured. "What were you screaming at? Your screams were so horrible—Jim, dear! What's the matter with you?"

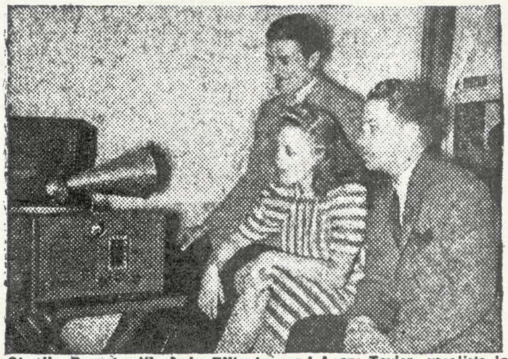
I hadn't exactly realized I'd been screaming as I came running up to the house, but that was all right. It certainly scared her.

"There's a big cat out there," I said. "Some kind of feline, panther, maybe, a great, tawny thing." I clung to her, just as though I were frightened out of my wits. "Gloria, it's watching the house. It's out there every night now." I began laughing. "I guess it's attracted by you, Gloria. Don't you see, you're feline, too? That's what you said, wasn't it?"

That certainly made her shudder. She stared at me for a second with those green eyes of hers. Then she pushed me away, ran into her bedroom, closed her door and locked it.

[*Turn page*]

MAKE YOUR OWN RECORDS AT HOME



Charlie Barnet with Judy Ellington and Larry Taylor, vocalists in his band, listen to a record they just made with Home Recordo.

Now a new invention permits you to make a professional-like recording of your own singing, talking or instrument playing. Any one can quickly and easily make phonograph records and play them back at once. Record your voice or your friends' voices. If you play an instrument, you can make a record and you and your friends can hear it as often as you like. You can also record orchestras of favorite radio programs right off the air and replay them whenever you wish.

Find Out If You Have Professional Talent

The movies . . . radio . . . stage in both Broadway and Hollywood are ever seeking new talent.

Before spending money for an audition, make a "home record" of your voice or instrument and mail it to a reliable agency . . . you might be one of the lucky ones to find fame and success thru this easy method of bringing your talents before the proper authorities.

IT'S LOTS OF FUN, TOO!

You'll get a real thrill out of home recording. Surprise your friends by letting them hear your voice as though it were broadcast. Record a snappy talking feature. Record jokes and you will become the life of the party. Great to help train your voice and to cultivate speech . . . nothing to practice . . . you start recording at once. No other mechanical or electrical devices needed. Everything necessary included. Nothing else to buy. Just sing, speak or play and HOME RECORDO unit which operates on any electric or old type phonograph will do the recording on special blank records we furnish. You can immediately play the record back as often as you wish. Make your home movie a talking picture with HOME RECORDO. Simply make the record while filming and play back while showing the picture.

THINK OF IT! I JUST MADE THIS RECORD WITH THE NEW HOME RECORDO!
YES, BOB, AND IT SURE SOUNDS LIKE YOUR VOICE!
IT'S WONDERFUL —AND SO SIMPLE —PLEASE LET ME MAKE A RECORD.

OPERATES ON YOUR AO OR DO
ELECTRIC PHONOGRAPHS
RECORD PLAYERS
RADIO-PHONE COMBINATIONS
Old or New Type
PHONOGRAPHS and PORTABLES

SEND NO MONEY! HURRY COUPON!

Everything is included. Nothing else to buy and nothing else to pay. You get complete HOME RECORDING UNIT which includes special recording needle, playing needles, 6 two-sided unbreakable records (equivalent to 12 records). Also included guide attachment combination recording playback unit suitable for recording a skit, voice, instrument of radio broadcast. Additional 2-sided blank records cost only $.75 per dozen.

COMPLETE OUTFIT INCLUDING SIX TWO-SIDED BLANK RECORDS, ONLY.......................... $2.98

HOME RECORDING CO., Studie KB
9 East 19th Street, New York, N. Y.

Send entire HOME RECORDING OUTFIT (including 6 two-sided records) described above by return mail. I will pay postman $2.98, plus postage, on arrival. (Send cash or money order now for $3.00 and save postage.)

Send.......... additional blank records at $.75 per dozen.

Name..

Address..

Note: Canada & Foreign, $3.50 cash with order.

How 50c a Month
Pays YOU Up to
$75.00 a Month

Here is the new 50c a month SICKNESS AND ACCIDENT POLICY, that is making insurance history. Never before has an insurance bargain like this been offered the people of America. For real value there is nothing like it anywhere. Think of it! For only 50c a month—about 1⅔c a day, this amazing policy pays you $50.00 a month for Sickness Disability; up to $75.00 a month for Accident Disability; $2,000.00 Accidental Death, and other liberal benefits. Over $900,000.00 cash benefits have already been paid on Sterling policies. Insure with confidence! Sterling Insurance is awarded the highest rating, A+ (excellent) by DUNNE'S, the largest policyholders reporting service in the world. One low cost of 50c a month to anyone in good health, ages 15 to 69. No medical examination. Get policy for FREE inspection—no cost or obligation. No salesman will call. Write today. THIS OFFER IS LIMITED.

EXAMINE THIS POLICY FREE

STERLING INSURANCE COMPANY,
5645 Jackson-Franklin Bldg., Chicago

Please mail me at once for FREE INSPECTION, your new 50c a month Sickness and Accident Policy. I am not obligated. No agent will call.

Name ....

Street Address ....

City .... State............

Name of Beneficiary ....

SONG POEM WRITERS
Write today for free Booklet outlining profit sharing plan.
ALLIED MUSIC
Dept. 32, 7608 Reading, Cincinnati, O.

FREE
3 questions answered with each purchase of Prof. Herman's 1942 5-Page Horoscope, price 25c. Tells what the new year holds for you, advice on love, business, money. Dream Chart, lucky numbers. Free daily guide. Send birthdate.
Prof. ALI BABA HERMAN
Station C, Box 1614, Cleveland, Ohio

ASTHMA
TREATMENT mailed on Free Trial. If satisfied send $1; if not, it's Free. Write me for your treatment today.
W. K. STERLINE, 830 Ohio Ave., Sidney, Ohio

RUPTURED?
Get Relief This Proven Way

Why try to worry along with trusses that gouge your flesh—press heavily on hips and spine—enlarge opening—fail to hold rupture? You need the Cluthe. No leg-straps or cutting belts. Automatic adjustable pad holds at real opening—follows every body movement with instant increased support in case of strain. Cannot slip whether at work or play. Light. Waterproof. Can be worn in bath. Send for amazing FREE book, "Advice To Ruptured," and details of liberal truthful 60-day trial offer. Also endorsements from grateful users in your neighborhood. Write:
CLUTHE SONS, Dept. 33, Bloomfield, New Jersey.

The Best and Brightest
All-Picture Magazine
COLLEGE HUMOR
NOW ON SALE 10c AT ALL STANDS

The next day, in a distant town, I bought the panther skin, a big, tawny affair, large enough to cover me. See how carefully I was working out my plan? I was planting everything in Gloria's mind ahead of time. Five days from now, I'd make my big play.

That night I gave her the injection. It would work in a hundred and twenty hours. Pretty clever of me, figuring out that toxin-antitoxin. I'd have made a fortune, practicing medicine with some of the schemes I'd had. This was one of the best of them. I planned it years ago.

Anyway, I gave it to Gloria. She didn't want to take it, but I persuaded her that her nerves were all on edge and that it was only a harmless sedative.

With five days to wait, I went out nearly every evening. It was fun sitting in the woods. It made me a little jittery, but I had my panther skin. The soft feel of it on my hands was comforting.

That fifth night, Gloria felt ill. Why wouldn't she? The toxin-antitoxin was reaching its climax. Gloria was pale, trembling, twitching at every limb. Terrified? I should say she was!

"Oh, Jim dear, what's the matter with me?"

Her lips twitched apart almost with a snarl as she said it and her lower jaw was working with little, spasmodic twitchings.

"Why, nothing," I soothed.

I knew I should put my arm around her, as though to comfort her, but I couldn't bring myself to do it. She was too gruesome-looking. It was evening. She was robed in a long, tawny night robe, made of some filmy crêpe stuff. Why did it happen to be tawny-colored? She was ghastly, so tall and slim, with her black hair coiled on her head. I couldn't look at that weird, pallid face, with its red lips twitching and those green eyes staring at me.

I shrank away from her.

"You're all right, Gloria," I muttered. "You're just frightened, imagining things about yourself."

She was convinced that a seizure of lycanthrobia was encroaching upon her, but of course it wasn't that. It was just my injection reaching its climax. The drug was working even better than I had hoped. She must have been particularly susceptible.

I really hadn't expected quite this much realism. Her chest was heaving now. By the shuddering folds of the long, tawny night robe, I could see that her whole body was quivering. Suddenly then she drew in her breath. Her red tongue licked out to moisten her parched, burning lips.

"Something—something horrible is the matter with me! Dear God—"

I shoved her away from me. I wanted to laugh, which was natural. There's nothing peculiar about wanting to laugh when you're all keyed up, tense and jittery.

"You're all right, Gloria," I told her. "You just get to bed. A little sleep will calm you."

I got her into bed and closed her door, knowing she couldn't sleep. Quickly I got ready to leave the house. She had no idea I was going. She probably thought I was sitting out in the living room. I extinguished all the lights. The little bungalow was pallid, with moonlight streaming in through the windows. It was so silent and ghostly, there was no sound at all except Gloria's panting breathing and her little whimpering cries. They sounded like an animal paralyzed by terror.

OUTSIDE the house, the fitful moonlight was like drenching silver on the rocks and black forests. I got my tawny animal skin, hidden in a thicket only a few hundred yards away. It covered my head and hung down over me as I crouched, moving toward the house. Lord, that was fun! You can imagine me creeping up to the house to frighten Gloria by appearing at her window. I had pulled up her lower sash.

I got there, crouching and showed the panther head with its glass eyes and opened jaw with white fangs. I held it up where she could see it. I wanted to laugh, but I didn't. I just mouthed little purring growls.

Moonlight bathed her room. I could see her lying on the bed, on top of the covers, slim and sleek and tawny in that robe. Her hands were at her sides, with her fingers working. Ab-

[*Turn page*]

You Can Learn To **Be an ARTIST**

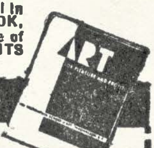
Trained Artists are capable of earning $30, $50, $75 a week!

Now is the time to prepare for a pleasant, profitable Art career. Our proven, practical method prepares you step by step at home, in your spare time. COMMERCIAL ART, ILLUSTRATING, CARTOONING all in ONE complete course. Mail coupon for FREE BOOK, "Art for Pleasure & Profit." Explains our course of training and opportunities in Art. 2 ART OUTFITS and other features furnished.

FREE BOOK gives details!

Washington School of Art, Studio 6611T
1115—15th St., N.W., Washington, D.C.

Name.................................... Age............
Address ....
City.................................... State...........



Learn To **MOUNT BIRDS**

Tan SKINS, Make Up FURS

Be a Taxidermist. *Double your hunting fun.* We teach you at Home. Mount Birds, Animals, Pets, Heads and Fish. Save your hunting trophies; decorate home and den. MAKE MONEY. Mount and Krome-tan for others. Big sparetime profits. INVESTIGATE TODAY. **FREE BOOK** with 100 game pictures. 48 pages. Hunters, get yours! It's Now Free. Send postal card TODAY -- This Minute! State your AGE.

NORTHWESTERN SCHOOL OF TAXIDERMY, Dept. 4178, Omaha, Nebr.

OLD LEG TROUBLE

Easy to use Viscose Method heals many old leg sores caused by leg congestion, varicose veins, swollen legs and injuries or no cost for TRIAL. Describe your trouble and get FREE BOOK.

T. G. VISCOSE METHOD COMPANY
140 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois

RAILWAY POSTAL CLERK
POSTOFFICE CLERK
GOVERNMENT CLERK

WANT A U·S·Government JOB?

START $1260 to $2100 YEAR

68,578 appointments from Civil Service Examinations in 1940 fiscal year. Thousands appointments each year. Prepare immediately. 32 Page Civil Service Book. Mail Coupon Today—SURE.

★

COUPON

Franklin Institute
Dept. B259
Rochester, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Rush to me FREE of charge, list of U. S. Government big pay jobs. Send me FREE 32-page book describing salaries, vacations, hours and work. Tell me how to qualify for one of these jobs.

Name ....
Address ....

FREE BOOK ON COLON TROUBLES

The McCleary Clinic, H-1197 Elms Blvd., Excelsior Springs, Mo., is putting out an up-to-the-minute 122-page book on Colon Disorders, Piles and Constipation and commonly associated chronic ailments. The book is illustrated with charts, diagrams and X-ray pictures of these ailments. Write today — a postcard will do — to the above address and this large book will be sent you FREE and postpaid.

SONG POEMS WANTED!

to be set to music. Submit for Free examination. Recordings made. VANDERBILT MUSIC STUDIO, Dept. H, Box 112, Coney Island, N. Y.

CHARM DROPS

An enchanting perfume of irresistible allure, clinging for hours with ineffable, fascinating fragrance. Just a tiny drop is enough. Full size bottle 98c prepaid, or $1.32 C.O.D. Directions free. One bottle FREE if two are ordered.

REXBELL, Box 124, Dept. 100
Huntington Station, New York

Quit Using Tobacco!

Write for Free Booklet and Learn How.
Results Guaranteed or Money Refunded.
NEWELL PHARMACAL COMPANY
105 Clayton Station St. Louis, Mo.

100,000 Satisfied Users

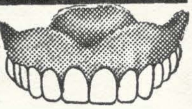
SPECIAL WORK FOR MARRIED WOMEN

Earn up to $23.00 weekly and your own dresses Free. No canvassing, no investment. Full or part time. Write fully, giving age, dress size.
FASHION FROCKS, Inc., Dept. 25042, Cincinnati, O.

FALSE TEETH

LOW AS $6.85

90 DAYS' TRIAL
TEST THEM
EXAMINE THEM



We make FALSE TEETH for you by mail from your own impressions. You have satisfaction of MONEY BACK GUARANTEE. Customers in United States and Canada report SATISFACTION but you be your own JUDGE.
SEND NO MONEY WRITE TODAY for FREE BOOKLET and MATERIAL.
CLEVELAND DENTAL SUPPLY CO.
Dept. 2-R1, East St. Louis, Illinois

FUN ON THE CAMPUS IN
CO-EDS
The All-Picture Magazine
ON SALE 10c AT ALL STANDS

ruptly she heard me. She gave a gasp and got up on one elbow and stared with those weird green eyes.

For a second I had the feeling that she'd jump from the bed and spring at me, like one animal coming to another. But she didn't. Her scream was pure, throat-splitting terror. I was pretending to climb over the sill, growling like a big cat and jiggling the animal skin. It terrified her so that she leaped from the bed, ran from the room, out through the dark house.

I raced after her, out on the path down the hill, one big cat chasing another. Clever, wasn't it? I didn't try to catch her at first, just kept a few feet behind her, crouching low, running and growling. I knew exactly how scared she was. Those were the eerie screams of a mind breaking under the strain. Why wouldn't it? It was just what I'd planned. you see that, don't you?

We ran about a quarter of a mile. I don't remember exactly. It was just a blur of rocks and moonlit trees and her ahead of me, with that tawny robe fluttering. Funny, her being afraid of me like that. I guess I was screaming, too, there at the last.

Screaming and laughing with triumph, I finally caught her. We both fell, with me clutching at her and both of us tangled in my brown animal skin. I remember that I saw lights coming on in a house down the path. But what of it? I was just clutching at Gloria, growling and laughing while she screamed and tried to fight me.

Then the moonlight struck on her face. She was horrible with those wild green eyes. I swear there was foam on her lips. My injection! But I hadn't expected it to work quite so realistically as that. It made me yell with horror. I remember that people were running at us from the nearby house and that I was screaming and laughing:

"See? She's just a cat, after all! She isn't a woman. She's just a cat having a fit—a cat that's gone mad—"

I think she was limp in my arms at the last. I remember that I was laughing with triumph, because everything had turned out just the way I'd wanted it to. And then my tense nerves broke and I guess I fainted. . . .

NOW they've got me locked up here, with the big, burly Carlton for my valet and old Dr. Jenkins thinking he's in charge of me. They tell me that Gloria was dead when they found us there on the path. She had died of fright. Her weak heart wouldn't stand the strain of her ghastly terror. That's true enough, but of course she was helped on by my injection, to which she was so amazingly susceptible.

I've never told anybody about that clever discovery of my medical days. The idea came to me when I was called to treat a little girl who had stepped on a rusty nail with her bare foot. Tetanus was a possibility, so I gave her the antitetanus serum.

Well, that kid turned out to be an exception to the usual rule. On the fifth day she developed the hives and a temperature as per schedule. But then the muscles of her neck began to feel sore and stiff and her jaw muscles stiffened! For a few hours you couldn't tell whether she had lockjaw or not. It turned out to be only the toxic effects—pseudo-tetanus, so to speak, with perhaps a slight serum-allergy.

It was an unusual, but authentic incident and it gave me the idea of developing the same thing with an anti-rabies serum. Creating a pseudo-madness! I worked at first to discover in my subject an allergy to some particular serum—that of a horse, or a rabbit, for instance. By using the serum to which the subject is even slightly allergic, instead of avoiding it, I caused a physical derangement. Then, after lengthy experiments, I developed a variation of the Pasteur serums which, even with one injection, resulted in a considerable disturbance, both physical and mental.

I was a strong healthy fellow in those days and I worked on it in secret, experimenting on myself. If only they had let me continue practicing medicine, think of what people would pay to use a device like pseudo-madness on rich old relatives!

With Gloria, I had only to find the type of animal serum to which she was allergic. Of course, there was always the chance that she wouldn't have been allergic to any, but fortunately she

[*Turn page*]

MACHINE SHOP MEN

Needed 'NOW!

Learn to set up and run ANY kind of machine; MAKE MORE MONEY NOW by learning quickly HOW TO DO THINGS which usually take years of study and practice. The demand for SKILLED men is ALREADY ahead of the supply, then what WILL IT BE a month or two from now?

Bigger Pay Don't miss this chance to qualify for promotion, don't miss this Big Opportunity which is yours almost for the asking. Eight Big Books chockful of important mechanical facts told simply and clearly. Over 3000 pages, nearly 3000 illustrations cover every subject fully, including Tool Making, Pattern Making, Foundry Work, Mechanical Drawing, Forging, Machine Shop Practice and Management, and hundreds of other subjects.

8 Big Books (Up-to-date Edition) Sent *FREE* to you for examination. With them we send a **Big Binder** of nearly 800 pages with 267 original shop tickets with 1200 illustrations. These show, step by step, how to set up and run almost any kind of job and are in **addition** to the 8 books. Decide in your own home or place of business whether or not you want to keep them, check up on any facts you want to. Note their great MONEY MAKING value, then, if you want them, pay on the easiest kind of payments. A year's consulting privileges with our engineers now given with these books without extra charge

American Technical Society, Publishers—Home Study Courses.

American Technical Society, Dept. S649, Drexel at 58th St., Chicago.
You may send me the 8 big books and binder of shop tickets for free examination. I will pay the delivery charges only, unless I decide to keep them in which case I will send $2.00 in ten days and $3.00 per month until the total price of only $34.80 is paid. If I return them in 10 days I will owe you nothing. You also agree to send me a certificate entitling me to consulting privileges with your experts for one year without extra charge.

Name..

Address..
Please attach a letter stating age, occupation, employer's name and address and that of at least one business man as reference.

Help Kidneys

If you suffer from Backache, Getting Up Nights, Nervousness, Leg Pains, Swollen Ankles and feel worn out, due to non-organic and non-systematic Kidney and Bladder troubles, you should try Cystex, which is giving joyous help to thousands. Printed guarantee. Money back unless completely satisfactory. Ask your druggist for Cystex today. **Only 35c.**

High School Course at Home Many Finish in 2 Years

Go as rapidly as your time and abilities permit. Course equivalent to resident school work—prepares for college entrance exams. Standard H.S. texts supplied. Diploma. Credit for H. S. subjects already completed. Single subjects if desired. High school education is very important for advancement in business and industry and socially. Don't be handicapped all your life. Be a High School graduate. Start your training now. Free Bulletin on request. No obligation.

American School, Dpt. H-858, Drexel at 58th, Chicago

ROLLS DEVELOPED

25c Coin. Two 5x7 Double Weight Professional Enlargements, 8 Gloss Deckle Edge Prints.
CLUB PHOTO SERVICE, Dept. 15, LaCrosse, Wis.

ANY PHOTO ENLARGED

Size 8 x 10 inches or smaller if desired. Same price for full length or bust form, groups, landscapes, pet animals, etc., or enlargements of any **part** of group picture. Safe return of original photo guaranteed.

47c 3 for $1.00

SEND NO MONEY Just mail photo or snapshot (any size) and within a week you will receive your beautiful enlargement, guaranteed fadeless. Pay postman 47c plus postage—or send 49c with order and we pay postage. Big 16x20-inch enlargement sent C. O. D. 78c plus postage or send 80c and we pay postage. Take advantage of this amazing offer now. Send your photos today. Specify size wanted.

STANDARD ART STUDIOS, 113 S. Jefferson St., Dept. 401-P, Chicago

was. I located it, prepared my toxin. On her, my invention worked to an amazing degree. Queer how susceptible she was, almost as though there actually were some truth to that lycanthrobia business after all and my serum had merely helped to precipitate an attack.

But I don't believe it, really. I was never afraid of her and I'm not afraid of her now. She can't frighten me, even though she's dead. That old legend of her family—that stuff about her ancestress' spirit taking possession of a cat—it's all a lot of bunk.

Gloria would probably like to do it, if she could I guess. She knows now that I killed Tom Rance so I could marry her. Certainly I did. You must have realized that. I sneaked up there and joined him that night, gave him some dope in his drink to put him to sleep. Then I ripped his face and throat with a little gadget I'd brought with me, with which it wasn't hard to tear open his jugulars. I spread his blood around the room, upset the furniture and watched him till he bled to death. Finally I put the cage-trap up to the smashed window and let the big wildcat escape.

Pretty clever of me, eh? Gloria knows about it now, of course. She'd like to revenge herself on me. She must yearn to possess the body of a cat and come in here and rip me to pieces. Cats can kill. Sure they can. But no big cat is ever going to rip my throat apart. I'm not afraid of cats. . . .

THERE'S a big wildcat out in the woods now. It watches my window every night, staring at me with its murderous green eyes. It gave me the jitters last night. Everything was deathly quiet at I sat holding onto the bars of my window. It was so quiet that I began wondering if there weren't something unnatural about it, as though maybe I weren't alone in my room. It was as though something was with me, something that crouched and held its breath as it stared at me with green eyes.

My room light was out. There was straggling moonlight in my room—the same pallid, eerie glow that there had been in Gloria's bedroom when

SAVE UP TO 50%
FACTORY-TO-YOU
PUSH-BUTTON TUNING
9 BANDS (ON 6 DIAL SCALES)
30 DAYS TRIAL
20 TIMES BETTER FOREIGN TUNING with SUPER BAND SPREAD RADIO!
PUT THIS CHASSIS IN YOUR PRESENT CABINET
E-Z TERMS
UP TO $50.00 TRADE-IN
WRITE for big FREE catalog. New 1942 models include Radios, Radio-Phonos, Home Recorders, Sensationally low factory-to-you prices: $11.95 to $212.00 ...up to 16 tubes. (User-Agents Wanted).
$19.75 COMPLETE with SPEAKER, TUBES, PUSH-BUTTON TUNING, MAGNA-TENNA LOOP AERIAL... READY TO PLAY
MIDWEST RADIO CORPORATION
DEPT. 62-C CINCINNATI, OHIO

BE PREPARED! LEARN TO SHOOT WITH BENJAMIN
Made in U. S. A.
.22 .177 BB
For Target—Small Game—Camping—Guaranteed—Accurate—Practical—Economical—Safe—Clean—Quiet. Adjustable Force—Amazing Maximum Velocity. No Smoke or Fumes. Bolt Action—Hammer Fire—Hair Trigger—Safety Lock—Hand Pump. Single Shot BB with 1 lb. shot $8.50; Single Shot cal. 177 or 22 RIFLED—with 500 Pellets $10.00; Holster $2.00. Also a complete line of Benjamin Genuine Compressed Air Rifles for BB and cal. 177 or 22. No license required from dealer or factory. Write today for complete specifications and free targets.
BENJAMIN AIR RIFLE CO., 889 Marion St., St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.

DICE. CARDS.
Specialties for Magicians use. Inks. Shiners. Check-Cop. Daubs. Catalog ten cents, stamps or coin.
HILL BROS., Box T, Salida, Colo.

NEW WRITERS NEEDED!
Editors seeking new talent. 2,500 markets buying. Send for professional writer's test of your talent and ability to write for pay. It's fun—and FREE! No obligation. Mail postcard for your Test NOW!
Send For Test FREE
Mildred Patrick, one of many new writers for whom we've sold. We show what to write, help you sell.
Comfort Writer's Service, Dept. 715, St. Louis, Mo.

Muscles Ache?
Feel "Killing You"? Do you feel "All-in" after work or exercise?
Get ANDY LOTSHAW All-Purpose BODY RUB
There's no reason why you or anyone in your family should suffer the torture of aching muscles. Just rub your arms, legs, back, feet, with ANDY LOTSHAW All-Purpose Body Rub, and change your groans to grins. It's the only all-purpose body rub that lubricates and tones up the skin as it relieves your pain. Do this right now! SEND ONLY 10c for a Generous-size Trial Bottle to ANDY LOTSHAW CO., Dept. K, 540 W. Randolph St., Chicago.

Thrilling Stories of Valiant British Pilots in Action in
RAF ACES
Now on sale 10c At all Newsstands

I stood at her window with the animal skin over me. The moonlight here came through the bars and made a pattern of silver and shadow on the floor.

Then I saw the thing in the darkness under my bed! It was a formless shadow, a crouching blob, like a giant cat with its back humped and the hair standing out straight on its neck. And its big tail was all puffed as it swished its sides.

"I see you!" I screamed. "I'm not afraid of you—"

It had come in the window between the bars, of course. There was plenty of room for that. I could see its green eyes now, there under my bed.

"You look like a cat, but you're just a dead thing! You can't hurt me. You're dead!"

Carlton came running when he heard my defiant shouts. He switched on the room light. I was still at the window, with an arm crooked around one of the bars as I faced the room, staring at the bed.

"Now, now, take it easy," Carlton said. "There's no cat here. You're just imagining things. Take it easy."

He tried to pat me soothingly, but I flung him away. Then old Dr. Jenkins came and they got me into bed. I tried to tell them that I wasn't afraid of cats. I've made that clear a hundred times. They closed my window last night and left my light on, but my window is open tonight as I sit here, writing this. Why wouldn't it be? I'm not a coward. No cat with green eyes is going to frighten me.

There's moonlight outside again tonight. You can see between the bars to where it lies in great splashes of molten silver that drenches the black rocks and edges the forest trees with a white sheen. The thing is out there, of course. I haven't seen it yet, but I know it's there, watching me.

Maybe I am a little frightened tonight. You get the jitters, waiting for something you know is going to happen. But I won't let her do it. No cat is going to keep on tormenting me. If I see the worst is coming, I'll cheat it. I've still got my little gadget here—my secret—my souvenir of Rance's death. It's my release and I'll use it tonight, if I—

[*Turn page*]

WORLD'S LARGEST DENTAL PLATE MAKERS
$6.85 to $35.00
FALSE TEETH
LOWEST PRICES
SEND NO MONEY

try... our dentures set with pearly-white genuine porcelain teeth; constructed from high-grade materials, with expert workmanship to give long service. We make all styles of plates.

Professional Model
DENTAL PLATES by Mail
We make to measure for you individually—*by mail*—Dental Plates for men and women—from an impression of your own mouth taken by you at home.

TRANSPARENT

By reading our catalog, learn how to save ONE-HALF or more on false teeth. Send for it Today!

ON 60 DAYS' TRIAL
Make us PROVE every word we say. Wear our teeth on trial for as long as 60 days. Then, if you are not perfectly satisfied with them—they will not cost you a cent. We take your word! Orders promptly and carefully filled.

ROOFLESS

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE of Satisfaction
We take this risk. We guarantee to refund to you your every cent if you're not 100% satisfied after 60 days' trial.

PARTIAL

FREE Send for FREE impression material, catalog and our new low prices. Send no money—just send name, address.
World's Largest Mail Order Dental Laboratory
UNITED STATES DENTAL COMPANY
1555 Milwaukee Ave., Dept. B-82, Chicago, Ill.

HAND-COLORED in Oil
PHOTO ENLARGEMENT
Beautifully mounted in 7 x 9 white frame mat. Made from any photograph, snapshot or negative. Original returned. Send 25c and stamp—no other charges.
COLORGRAPH, Dept. TF-17,
17 N. LeClaire, Chicago.
25c
PLUS 3c STAMP for Mailing

RUPTURED Throw Away Your Truss!
FREE—See this Amazing New Discovery
Why suffer with rupture? You need never wear your truss again! You will be amazed at the wonderful successful results. See how this discovery works. FREE. Positively costs you nothing. No obligation. Just fill in and
MAIL COUPON TODAY!
PNEUMATIC INSTITUTE CO., 103 Park Av., Dept.T3, New York
Send me free under plain seal and wrapper "Amazing New Discovery." This places me under no obligation to buy.
Name ....
Address T3

TEAR GAS
100% Protection
A REAL SURE FIRE SELLER
Thugs and Thieves Beware!—Here is a regular 5 shot repeater which discharges 5 smothering clouds of Tear Gas in rapid succession to instantly Stop, Stun and Incapacitate the most vicious man or beast. A safe and effective substitute for dangerous firearms. NO PERMANENT INJURY. Needed in Stores, Banks, Autos and Homes everywhere to protect Life and Property. No skill required. Also Pencil Guns, Electric Shells, Riot Bombs, Fountain Pen Guns, Police Club Guns. All precision-built. NO TOYS. Demonstrations lead to $4.00 to $16.00 sales, offering big profits. Handle our Tear Gas Equipment as a side line, you'll soon give it full time.
TRIAL OFFER: To enable you to make a quick start, we will send you a complete demonstrator outfit consisting of an Automatic Pencil Gun with 10 demonstrator cartridges, and 3 powerful Tear Gas Cartridges, fully guaranteed, for only $2.00. At this low cost, you can promptly break into a business that is hot, alive and not overcrowded. Complete sales plan furnished with each order or inquiry. Write today.
HAGEN IMPORT COMPANY, Dept. S-448, St. Paul, Minn.

INDIGESTION
may excite the Heart

Gas trapped in the stomach or gullet may act like a hair-trigger on the heart. The heart is not hurt but it skips and races like mad. At the first sign of distress smart men and women depend on Bell-ans Tablets to set gas free. If the FIRST DOSE doesn't prove Bell-ans better, return bottle to us and receive DOUBLE Money Back. 25c at all druggists.

FREE SAMPLES OF REMARKABLE TREATMENT FOR
Stomach Ulcers
Due to Gastric Hyperacidity

H. H. Bromley, of Shelburne, Vt., writes: "I suffered for years with acid-stomach trouble. My doctors told me I had acid stomach ulcers and would have to diet the rest of my life. Before taking your treatment I had lost a lot of weight and could eat nothing but soft foods and milk. After taking Von's Tablets, I felt perfectly well, ate almost anything and gained back the weight I had lost." If you suffer from indigestion, gastritis, heartburn, bloating or any other stomach trouble due to gastric hyperacidity, you, too, should try Von's for prompt relief. Send for FREE Samples of this remarkable treatment and details of trial offer with money back guarantee. Instructive Booklet is included. Write:
PHILADELPHIA VON CO. Dept. 87-J
Fox Building, Philadelphia, Pa.

SONG & POEM WRITERS
Have you a song, poem or just a lyric? WE SUPPLY THE MELODY and make recordings of your original songs.
Send yours to
CINEMA SONG COMPANY, P.O. Box2828, Dept. B-9, Hollywood, Cal.

The PHANTOM
Never misses!

The World's Greatest Sleuth
Tackles a Grim Mystery
of Baffling Clues
in
THE BLACK GOLD KILLERS
•
A Full Book-Length Novel
in the November Issue of
THE PHANTOM DETECTIVE
•
EVERY MONTH 10c AT ALL STANDS

For All Crossword Puzzle Fans!
POPULAR CROSSWORD PUZZLES
NOW ON SALE 10c AT ALL STANDS

There it is! I saw it just then, staring at me through the bars. But it doesn't dare come in.

Get away from me, you accursed anachronism from the Middle Ages—

* * * * *

JAMES PORTER'S body was found by Carlton, his attendant. It was lying on the floor beside the table where he had been writing his scrawled manuscript. It was a gruesome sight. The face was horribly slashed into ribbons of bloody pulp. The throat was a pulpy welter, ghastly with blood that had pumped out and drenched the body with crimson.

"Tore out his jugular," Carlton shudderingly reported to the group of policemen and sanatorium attendants who had gathered.

The white-faced, gray-haired Dr. Jenkins was bending over the body.

"This thing he's holding in his hand," he murmured, "it looks like cat claws mounted in a brush handle."

It was Porter's souvenir of Rance's death, his release. . . .

One of the policemen had been glancing through the manuscript pages.

"The guy sure was just a nut," he said. "I guess he was always dotty. That's why they wouldn't let him practice medicine, eh, Doc?"

The policeman's grin faded.

"Say, what he tells here about experimentin' on himself to find out how to make people go mad—maybe that's what was the matter with him. He experiments on himself with those serums and then goes batty himself, huh?"

"Evidently a suicide," the police sergeant said. "He had medical knowledge, knew how to slash his jugular with those cat claws. A sudden suicidal mania. There's blood on that gadget, Doc."

Old Dr. Jenkins nodded soberly.

"Blood all over him, of course, from so much bleeding." He stared at the awed group of men. "But I can't understand how he had the strength to keep on clawing at his face and neck. You wouldn't think—"

A sudden startled exclamation interrupted him. It had come from one of the policemen who were standing at the open, barred window.

"Come here! Take a look!"

Crowding at the window, they all saw the thing. It was out at the edge of the woods, a blob of crouching shadow. Its green eyes glowed in the darkness as it stared up at the lighted window.

It was just a roaming wildcat, of course, but the policeman hastily pulled down the sash and the blind. All the men were shuddering.

FEATURED NEXT ISSUE

THE FIFTH COLUMN KILLERS

A Sensational Complete

Book-Length Novel

of Spy Mystery

By

C. K. M. SCANLON

•

Packed with Action, Thrills, Suspense

and Excitement!

DOWN GO TIRE PRICES

On GOODYEAR
FIRESTONE-GOODRICH
and Other Standard Makes

Only our **25 years' experience,** big buying power and volume production make it possible to offer these **amazing tire values.** Think of it; **Standard Brand** reconditioned tires, serviceably repaired by experts with high-grade materials at a fraction of original cost. Order now. Enjoy the tremendous savings our cut prices make possible.

$1.85
28-4.75-19

BALLOON TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes
29x4.40-21	$1.85	$0.85
29x4.50-20	1.85	.85
30x4.50-21	1.95	.85
28x4.75-19	1.85	.95
29x4.75-20	2.10	.95
28x5.00-19	2.25	1.05
30x5.00-20	2.40	1.05
5.25-17	2.45	1.15
28x5.25-18	2.45	1.15
29x5.25-19	2.45	1.15
30x5.25-20	2.50	1.15
31x5.25-21	2.80	1.15
5.50-17	2.75	1.15
28x5.50-18	2.75	1.15
29x5.50-19	2.75	1.15
6.00-16	3.15	1.45
6.00-17	2.85	1.15
30x6.00-18	2.85	1.15
31x6.00-19	2.85	1.15
32x6.00-20	2.95	1.25
33x6.00-21	3.10	1.25
32x6.50-20	3.20	1.35

TRUCK BALLOONS

Size	Tires	Tubes
6.00-20	$3.10	$1.65
6.50-20	3.35	1.95
7.00-20	4.60	2.95
7.50-20	5.15	3.75
8.25-20	6.75	4.95

HEAVY DUTY TRUCK TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes
30x5	$3.50	$1.95
32x6	6.95	2.75
34x7	9.95	3.25
38x7	9.45	3.95
36x8	9.65	3.95
40x8	11.60	4.15

ALL OTHER SIZES

DEALERS WANTED

EVERY TIRE GUARANTEED

Our Guarantee Bond agrees to replace at ½ price tires failing to give full 9 months' service. Replacements f. o. b. Chicago.

Don't Delay—Order Today

SEND ONLY $1.00 DEPOSIT on each tire ordered. ($3.00 on each Truck Tire.) We ship balance C. O. D. **Deduct 5 per cent** if cash is sent in full with order. To fill order promptly we may substitute brands if necessary. ALL TUBES BRAND NEW—GUARANTEED—

PERRY-FIELD TIRE & RUBBER CO.
1720 S. Michigan Avenue, Dept. TF-48, Chicago

STOP Scratching

Relieve Itch Fast—or Money Back

For quick relief from itching of eczema, pimples, athlete's foot, scales, scabies, rashes and other externally caused skin troubles, use world-famous, cooling, antiseptic, liquid D. D. D. Prescription. Greaseless, stainless. Soothes irritation and quickly stops the most intense itching. 35c trial bottle proves it, or money back. Ask your druggist today for **D. D. D. PRESCRIPTION.**

USED Correspondence Courses

Complete home-study courses and educational books, slightly used. Sold, rented, exchanged. All subjects. Money-back guarantee. Cash paid for used courses. Full details and illustrated 72-page bargain catalog FREE. Write today!

NELSON CO.
500 Sherman, Dept. L-227, Chicago

WE MATCH PANTS

To Any Suit!

Double the life of your coat and vest with correctly matched pants. **100,000 patterns.** Every pair hand tailored to your measure. Our match sent FREE for your O. K. before pants are made. Fit guaranteed. Send piece of cloth or vest today.

SUPERIOR MATCH PANTS COMPANY
209 S. State St. Dept. 275, Chicago

SONG POEMS WANTED

TO BE SET TO MUSIC

Free Examination. Send Your Poems to

J. CHAS. McNEIL, MASTER OF MUSIC
510-TF So. Alexandria Los Angeles, Calif.

FALSE TEETH

MONEY RETURNED
IF NOT SATISFIED!

$6.50

90 Days' Trial

Order by mail—a wide selection of styles. As LOW AS $6.50 a plate. Your money back if not satisfied. 90 Days' Wearing Trial. Ask for free descriptive circular showing different styles and FREE impression material. Ask about our budget savings plan. Gold crown given with plates No. 2 to No. 6. Write today.

INDIVIDUALLY Made from YOUR Mouth Impression

SEND NO MONEY

Ward Dental Lab., 936 W. 63 St. Dept. 26L, Chicago

"THE BOSS DIDN'T EVEN KNOW MY NAME"

"HE SAID he remembered seeing me around, but he didn't even know my name until the I. C. S. wrote him that William Harris had enrolled for a course of home study and was doing fine work.

"'Who's William Harris?' he asked. Then he looked me up. Told me he was glad to see I was ambitious. Said he'd keep his eye on me.

"He did too. Gave me my chance when Frank Jordan was sent out on the road. I was promoted over older men who had been with the firm for years.

"My spare-time studying helped me to get that job and to keep it after I got it. It certainly was a lucky day for me when I signed that I. C. S. coupon."

• • •

One reason employers recognize the value of I. C. S. training is that many of them are former I. C. S. students. They recognize that "today's I. C. S. students are tomorrow's leaders."

In the 50 years since these Schools were founded, more than $5,000,000 has been spent in preparing and revising texts. A personal, individual method of instruction has been developed. Isn't it better to get the facts now — than to wait five years and wish you had?

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS
CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO AMBITIOUS AMERICANS
1891 ★ 1941

BOX 3967-T, SCRANTON, PENNA.

★ Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the course *before* which I have marked X: ★

TECHNICAL AND INDUSTRIAL COURSES

☐ Agriculture ☐ Air Brake
☐ Air Conditioning
☐ Airplane Drafting
☐ Architectural Drafting
☐ Architecture
☐ Auto Engine Tune-up
☐ Auto Technician
☐ Aviation ☐ Aviation Mechanic
☐ Boilermaking
☐ Bridge Engineering
☐ Chemistry
☐ Civil Engineering
☐ Coal Mining
☐ Concrete Engineering
☐ Contracting and Building
☐ Cotton Manufacturing
☐ Diesel Engines
☐ Electrical Drafting
☐ Electrical Engineering
☐ Electric Lighting
☐ Foundry Work ☐ Heating
☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
☐ Highway Engineering
☐ House Planning
☐ Locomotive Engineer
☐ Machinist
☐ Management of Inventions
☐ Mfg. of Pulp and Paper
☐ Marine Engines
☐ Mechanical Drafting
☐ Mechanical Engineering
☐ Mine Foreman
☐ Navigation
☐ Patternmaking
☐ Pharmacy ☐ Plumbing
☐ Poultry Farming
☐ Practical Telephony
☐ Public Works Engineering
☐ Radio, General
☐ Radio Operating
☐ Radio Servicing
☐ R. R. Section Foreman
☐ R. R. Signalman ☐ Refrigeration
☐ Sanitary Engineering
☐ Sheet Metal Work
☐ Ship Drafting ☐ Shop Practice
☐ Steam Electric ☐ Steam Engines
☐ Steam Fitting
☐ Structural Drafting
☐ Structural Engineering
☐ Surveying and Mapping
☐ Telegraph Engineering
☐ Telephone Work
☐ Textile Designing ☐ Toolmaking
☐ Welding, Electric and Gas
☐ Woolen Manufacturing

BUSINESS COURSES

☐ Accounting ☐ Advertising
☐ Bookkeeping
☐ Business Correspondence
☐ Business Management
☐ Cartooning ☐ Civil Service
☐ College Preparatory
☐ Commercial
☐ Cost Accounting
☐ C. P. Accounting
☐ First Year College
☐ Foremanship ☐ French
☐ Good English
☐ High School
☐ Illustrating
☐ Managing Men at Work
☐ Railway Postal Clerk
☐ Salesmanship
☐ Secretarial ☐ Spanish
☐ Showcard and Sign Lettering
☐ Traffic Management

HOME ECONOMICS COURSES

☐ Advanced Dressmaking
☐ Foods and Cookery
☐ Home Dressmaking
☐ Professional Dressmaking and Designing
☐ Tea Room and Cafeteria Management, Catering

Name......................................*Age*..............*Address*......................................
City......................................*State*..............*Present Position*......................................

Canadian residents send coupon to International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada
British residents send coupon to I. C. S., 71 Kingsway, London, W. C. 2, England

MATHEMATICS MADE EASY
SIDE VIEW

FREE!

THIS VALUABLE NEW BOOK "Mathematics Made Easy" — a fascinating and enlightening volume that no one should be without — PLUS a Deluxe Professional SLIDE RULE. Saves time, simplifies all calculating, fractions, estimating, percentages, decimals, costs, ratio, etc. Complete instructions for using Slide Rule. BOTH FREE — IF YOU ACCEPT THIS AMAZING OFFER NOW!

MAKE MORE MONEY!
WIN A BETTER JOB!

Learn **BLUEPRINT READING**

With This
Amazing A. B. C. METHOD
LEARN AT HOME IN SPARE TIME

Here it is at last! A quick, easy shortcut way to learn to read blueprints on sight. Created by top-ranking experts. It doesn't matter whether you're a mechanic, high school boy, office worker, student, plumber, carpenter, steamfitter, truck driver or employee in any of the mechanical and DEFENSE industries — this is what you need — the surest, quickest way to win a better job and more pay for yourself. And it's yours at a cost so astonishingly low you'll be amazed.

New Shadowgraph Method Enables You to Read Blueprints the First Day!

The specially constructed "bookcase" in which the 24 A. T. I. manuals (over 600 illustrations) are packed, is in itself a unique "working model" designed to enable you to read blueprints from the first day

Meets Blueprint Requirements for Civil Service and National Defense Jobs

This sensational SHADOWGRAPH method of Blueprint Reading was perfected by a group of Outstanding Experts. They've eliminated all the technical phraseology — all the complicated details. They've boiled down everything you need to know about Blueprint Reading into 24 manuals. no matter what branch of industry you are in. No need to attend a trade or technical school to learn Blueprint Reading now! No long tedious months of study. With this amazing new course, a few minutes a day is all you need to enable you to read blueprints on sight! Simple, complete, practical! No dry textbooks — you learn by seeing and doing — and you READ BLUEPRINTS from the very FIRST DAY!

Now Anyone Who Can Read English— Can Read Blueprints—Quickly—Easily!

Everything you want to know about blueprints is put right at your fingertips — in down-to-earth, plain language so that anyone who can read English CAN ACTUALLY READ BLUEPRINTS FROM THE VERY FIRST DAY! We planned this new FAST way to learn blueprint reading so that you can put it RIGHT to work, winning a BETTER JOB AND BIGGER PAY FOR YOU.

IF YOU ARE A

STUDENT
MECHANIC
WELDER
CARPENTER
PLUMBER
STEAMFITTER
SHIPBUILDER
MACHINIST
SHEET METAL WORKER
TOOLMAKER
ELECTRICIAN
STEEL WORKER
AVIATION MECHANIC
RADIO MECHANIC

You Must Know BLUEPRINT READING

Send No Money — Pay Nothing to Postman

The entire 24-Manual course will be sent to you without obligation for 5-day FREE EXAMINATION! Send them back if they don't live up to everything we claim for them. You have nothing to lose—Success, bigger pay and new opportunities to gain! Mail the coupon NOW!

These Noted Experts Created This Amazing Course

H. V. Walsh—B.A. Professor, Columbia University, New York City, well-known author and lecturer, listed in "Who's Who in America."

F. A. Rappolt—B.S., C.E., M.S., and P.E. Professor, School of Technology, College of the City of N. Y. Widely-known civil engineer.

F. J. Burns—B.S., M.E., Professor at Newark College of Engineering, N. J.

FREE 5-DAY EXAMINATION

AUSTIN TECHNICAL INSTITUTE, Div. S.M., 899 Broad St., Newark, N. J.

Send the complete 24-Manual Blueprint Reading Course and Working Model "Bookcase" including the FREE book "Mathematics Made Easy" and the FREE Slide Rule on 5 days' FREE APPROVAL. If I decide to keep the course I will remit $1.95 within 5 days, and $2 monthly for 3 months until the FULL PRICE of $7.95 is paid. Otherwise I will return everything to you.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

REFERENCE: ....

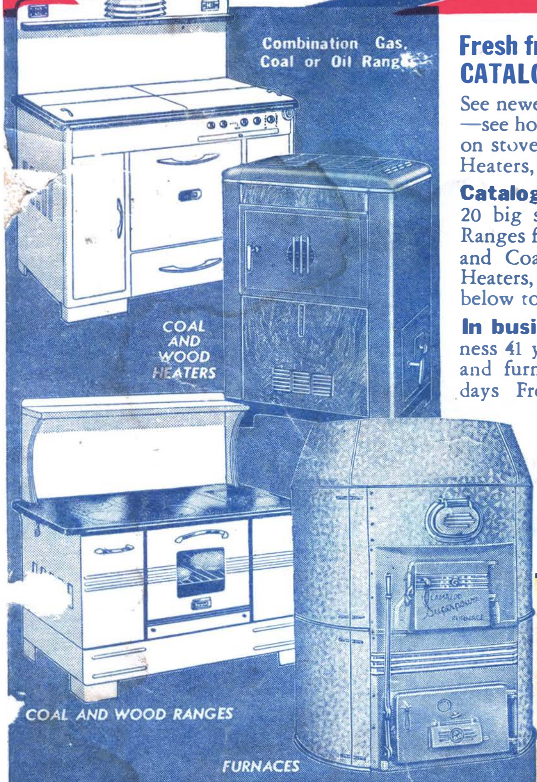
CITY .... STATE..............

SAVE 10% Discount for full cash with order — same return guarantee.

"YOU CAN SAVE $18 to $35 .. on your New KALAMAZOO STOVE —I DID!"

NEW
Free
Catalog

All you do is mail coupon for FREE CATALOG!



Fresh from the press—this new 1942 KALAMAZOO CATALOG—FREE to you. Mail coupon today!

See newest streamlined styles—see amazing new features—see how easy to own a new range—as little as $5 down on stoves. Choose from 106 styles and sizes of Ranges, Heaters, Furnaces. Many illustrated in full color.

Catalog full of new ideas—More bargains than in 20 big stores—Gas Ranges, Combination Dual-Oven Ranges for Gas and Coal, for Gas and Oil, for Electricity and Coal; Coal and Wood Ranges, Oil Ranges, Oil Heaters, Coal and Wood Heaters, Furnaces. Mail Coupon below today for Factory Prices.

In business 41 years—Kalamazoo has been in business 41 years. We sell millions of dollars worth of stoves and furnaces every year. 1,700,000 Satisfied Users. 30 days Free Trial. Factory Guarantee. Factory Prices. 24 hour shipments. Send for this big FREE CATALOG. Save money. Mail Coupon today!

All Kalamazoo Gas Ranges and Combination Ranges approved by American Gas Association for NATURAL, MANUFACTURED or BOTTLED GAS.

Now over 250 Kalamazoo Stores in 15 States. Ask us for address of nearest store.

30 DAYS FREE TRIAL

EASY TERMS

106 STYLES & SIZES

24 hr. SHIPMENT

Kalamazoo Stove & Furnace Co., Manufacturers
493 Rochester Ave., Kalamazoo, Michigan

Dear Sirs: Send FREE FACTORY CATALOG. Check articles in which you are interested:

- ☐ **Combination Gas, Coal and Wood or Oil Ranges**
- ☐ **Combination Coal and Electric Ranges**
- ☐ **Coal and Wood Ranges**
- ☐ **Coal & Wood Heaters**
- ☐ **Gas Ranges**
- ☐ **Oil Heaters**
- ☐ **Oil Ranges**
- ☐ **Furnaces**

Name..

Address..

City..................................*State*..........................

"A Kalamazoo Direct to You"

Trade Mark Registered